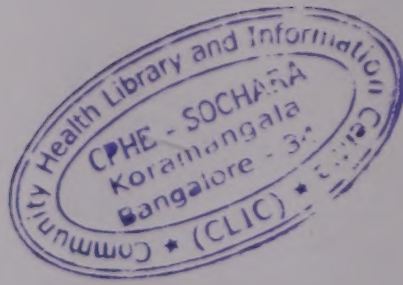


another world is possible

**PEOPLES
VOICES**

struggles of courage, resistance and hope

16609



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This preliminary compilation is a sharing of experience of resistance, courage and hope. It reflects the richness of life in its spirit, despite the limitations of the written word. It has been a difficult selection process, but time and space constraints do not permit more.

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This is the preliminary volume. The wealth of testimonies that would actually be presented at the Forum will be included in the final version, as also those that were received after 28 December 2002. We provide the ribbon, but however good the bouquet, there are more flowers--and more beautiful ones--on in the field. This is our tribute to all of them--who celebrate life, despite the odds.

The Voices Team
Hyderabad, India
30 December 2002

People's Voices

Dear Friends,

We have come from distant lands and different cultures, having dissimilar social settings and governance systems. But for us today this distance has drifted away, these differences have disappeared. It is all because of the weaving together of our unique life-experiences into our personal, family and community histories, which we want to share with you today and in the next three days.

We have come here to testify. Globalisation has gone berserk. The market forces have mauled and mangled our lives. They have looted our lands and usurped our possessions. They have sucked our labour energies to make their money-making engines of development roar with 'success'—as they like to define their goal in life. Water and air, the most basic and generations-old collective possessions of humanity, have been unilaterally appropriated, polluted and wasted. Our homes have become houses, for our near and dear ones are forced to migrate to far away places and to live in slums in order to fill our stomachs. Health has become a costly commodity. We dare not think of education for us and for our children, not to speak of information and communications technology. They are beyond our reach, beyond our understanding. We pinned our hopes on our governance system. But the so-called people's representatives have betrayed our trust. The administration has become callous and insensitive to our plight. Laws and policies have become fetters for us. Nevertheless, we want to raise our voices in unison before you for the world to hear and to respond.

We have come here to witness. All these facts of life have not happened only to us, but also to our families and communities. If not today, then tomorrow, they could be your mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, uncles and aunts. There are hundreds of thousands in Asia and millions around the world who have similar stories to share. We want to be witnesses of their tales of sorrows and struggles, triumph and tragedies, for they belong to our world, they are one of us. They, too, need a voice to speak out. We want our voices to become their medium to your ears, your feelings, your thoughts and your commitment to re-fashion this world decisively, differently and with dignity.

We have come here to question. Who are these market actors and agents? Why should we allow them to dominate us, control our lives and shape our destiny? What right do they have to make food and education inaccessible to us, to alienate us from our land and forests, to devalue our labour with a paltry income, to pirate our intellectual property rights of the natural environment, to choke us with polluted air, to commodify our sisters in sex markets and to frighten us with state militarism and global terrorism to achieve their narrow agenda of interests? In fact, who benefits from all this so-called development and growth? Ultimately who is sovereign: The actors and agents of the market? The State and its minions? The dominant castes, classes and races? Or, is it we, the people, who are sovereign?

We have come here to protest. The narration of our experiences is simple, straightforward and deeply personal. But read between the lines of our experiences. Interpret them in the light of your experiences. Notice our rejection of the assumptions mouthed ad nauseam by the market agents and their intermediaries. They claim progress, but for whom? They promise freedom and improved quality of life, but for whom? They certify security, but for whom? They raise the slogan of democracy, but for whose benefit? They cajole us into believing the advantages of removing national boundaries, but for what—for the free flow of their trade or for the free movement of peoples? We protest their ideology, their claims, their strategies and their actions.

We have come here to assert. Our identity we claim, our dignity we affirm, our rights we assert and our sovereignty we demand – without compromise. The ancestral lands, forests and rivers belong to the indigenous peoples. The Dalits have the right to touch and be touched. The

sky-scraping hotels and the long highways belong to them for these are the products of their hard labour. Labourers, organised and unorganised, have the right to protection of the labour power they supply for the market. The sea and its resources are the generational property of the fishing women and men. Women's rights are human rights wherever they are and in whatever situation they are placed. Children have their inalienable right to childhood. The differently-abled have their claim to be treated with dignity. The senior generation claims the right to be recognised and accepted as valuable humans.

We have come here to re-write history with our blood and sweat for as toiling masses it belongs to us, and not to the national and international political rulers, racist, casteist and religious communal chieftains, national and global corporate regimes and business houses.

- > *To the international and national market agents and their institutions, governments and corporations, and the business class we say:* Stop treating us as 'collateral damage', as a dispensable and excluded lot.
- > *To the corrupt politicians, lethargic bureaucrats and insensitive police force we say:* Stop your populist propaganda of poverty eradication policies, threats of militancy and nuclear warfare, hate campaigns of nationalism and patriotism, empty slogans of decentralisation of the governance system, and cold-blooded impunity in the face of gross human rights violations against us.
- > *To the sectarian and chauvinist forces and patriarchal rulers in civil society we say:* Stop your hate campaign and divisive politics, doublespeak mindsets and stereotyped images, and sucking away the labour energies of the labour class.

The wheel of history is reaching a turning point. Our life and history indicts you as criminals of global generational homicide. Our testimonies here are only one of the signs of what is yet to come. The world you claim to fashion today neither suits our lives, nor is relevant for future generations. We want to design a new world. We have come here with the belief that Another World is Possible. But we do not want this to remain in the realm of possibilities. We are born in an unjust world, we do not want to leave it as it is for future generations. We want to change it into a people's world inhabited by women and men with flesh and blood.

Dear Friends,

We have come here to welcome you, not to hear us speaking as spectators, and certainly not to act as fence sitters. We have come here to invite you to be one of us, to listen to our tales of struggles, courage and hope, to commune with us, to become part of our lives, to take up the cause of building a new world. Pass on this message to one and all at your home, at your workplace, at the street-corners, at the parliamentary elections and proceedings, at the marketplaces. Let the assertion of the rights of all of us and the claim to the restoration of our dignity turn into creative energies, energies into ripples, ripples into waves and waves into a deluge so that in solidarity we can tear down the fortress of the market regime and build instead a people's world wherein human rights governance becomes the order of the day.

This is the introductory message when the 16 "victims" of the globalisation process went to the dais to inaugurate their event 'Peoples' Voices' by lighting the fire (lamp) of constant courage, dogged determination and limitless hope, amidst untold struggles and unmitigated suffering, to make their life a celebration of pure, simple and joyous existence.

Bullied, battered and broken by the global, regional and national market forces, their life has been, and is, one of shattered pieces still yearning for integrating themselves into wholeness and humanness. They want life to be a celebration of the fullness of living — for themselves, for others facing similar fate from the market forces and for all children, women and men who want to choose their life to be different from what these forces have determined to design for them.

People's Voices: Why?

Struggles of Courage, Resistance and Hope

The People's Voices forum at the Asian Social Forum, to be held at Hyderabad, India from 3—6 January 2003, will bring together 16 victims of globalisation from across Asia to give their testimonies before an assembly of around 3000 people. It will put names and faces to the sheer human cost of this neo-liberal paradigm of development that is often hidden in the avalanche of statistics and sanitised terminology as 'collateral damage.' It will highlight their struggle which is one of courage, resistance and hope—the fact that they are survivors.

Its focus will be on the fact that their human rights are violated—which indeed is the stark reality today—precisely because they do not take the human, social and environmental cost of the present globalisation of capital, lying down. Instead, they exhibit courage to stand up for their right to social equitable and environmentally just development, to resist various powerful forces that would usurp their rights and to hope for a better future for themselves and future generations. These living testimonies will be supported by print and audiovisual documentation and all media will be roped in to disseminate information.

1. The brave new world

The first decade of the new millennium has seen the increased participation of world citizens in setting the agenda of the world. The rise of global civil society, 'middle-classing' of leadership has seen increased attention being paid to human rights. This global citizenship is forming increased links—the bottom up globalisation that is so vital for solidarity. The formal space for this global civil society has increased, with global institutions according space for civil society organisations.

Poverty is now clearly seen as a factor of distribution—and therefore power—rather than a factor of production, with even traditionally 'poor' countries having food surplus and starvation deaths simultaneously. Attempts to address poverty world over, including by governments, acknowledge it to be one of social mobilisation and empowerment. This realisation enshrined in state and international documents is matched by the brutal, violent and legal violation of human rights by the very same state. While the state is ostensibly for the sustenance of individuals and groups, in practice the state perpetuates its survival at the cost of people. Though logically the state should justify curtailment of rights, often the people have to justify why they require rights, since residual rights and sovereignty are deemed to vest with the state and not with the people.

Ironically, the space for putting the human being at the centre has become dissent space—and this dissent space has become more ritualised and controlled and therefore more restrictive. Space for traditional forms of dissent has shrunk considerably. What was legitimate in the 1960s and even 1990s is now passé. Movements are struggling to find the right idiom, not only to capture the imagination of the masses but also to successfully put forward their agenda of putting people in the centre of development. While global institutions—such as the UN and the World Bank—do have formal space for civil society organisations, unfortunately this space is woefully inadequate. It is often restricted to 'observer' status. The voices are allowed, but seldom heard, and acted upon even more rarely.

2. The new reality

■ The State does not represent the nation.

This is a rather controversial statement, since it arouses passion. But we implicitly accept that as a reality when making gender audits mandatory. Gone are the days when a few men could decide what was best for the entire nation and get away with it. Now it is accepted that women

need to be present in decision-making if their interests are to be taken care of. So also other sections of society.

■ The increasing middle class and globalisation of solidarity.

The middle-class, unlike the lower classes, know how to use the instruments of state, media and technology. The increasing middle class coincides with the shrinking of the state—the traditional sinecure of the middle class. This means that more and more from the middle class are facing a sense of exclusion. In the search for meaning, they transfer this alienation to activism to crystallise the alienation felt by historically marginalised groups, claiming leadership of these sections by organising them and articulating their aspirations. In the past, the state could bypass these people by physically exterminating them or by marginalising or discrediting them by various means. Now there is a marked difference due to three key features.

- ♦ This excluded middle-class is no longer in isolated minorities. The state no longer has the resources to 'buy them up' or co-opt them. This middle class is able to form significant pressure groups by linking with others across the globe to ensure that global minimum standards are applied everywhere.
- ♦ The advent of the global citizen is a significant phenomenon today. The protests of the past were localised. Each was treated as a separate reality, isolated and separate settlements in 'addressing' them. The new technology—such as the internet—and global solidarity makes it possible for the resistance and protests to be globalised and synchronised. Even if the 'decision-makers' sign on the dotted line, the peoples' informed consent is needed for the project to be implemented.
- ♦ The middle class is coming even from the excluded communities. They are representatives within the dominant discourse and institutions. Isolated communities can, and do, use global links to make the critical mass to impact on policy and projects.

With the increase in middle class, these pressures will only increase.

■ Secession of the successful.

Paradoxically, the increase in middle class affluence and influence is matched by their disengagement from the state. Instead of making the state work, those can afford to do so prefer to use the services of non-state players. This now includes even security, which was the sole preserve of the state police even a decade earlier. Now even the upper middle class can afford basic private services—effectively paying twice for the same service: once to the state as tax, and once to the service provider.

There are multiple consequences of this. The cost of what is effectively double taxation is passed on to the poor. So the extraction and expropriation systems become even more efficient and exploitative. The middle class, though affluent, believes itself to be on a survival footing. Therefore the attempt is not to address the structural causes, which they can, given their surplus accumulation. Rather it is self-gratification due to the created insecurity and want creation by the media.

■ Increasing role and power of non-state, transnational actors.

The world is no longer state-centric. The conditioning of development assistance on structural adjustment policies by the World Bank has led to the weakening of state's ability to fulfil many rights. When state centric, there was some form of accountability due to centuries of evolution of citizens' coping mechanisms. National corporations too have accountability. The processes of exclusion have always had a major place for non-state actors. But these actors were reachable both geographically and judicially.

Transnational corporations [TNCs] are a law unto themselves. They are far away from the poor. TNCs straddle national frontiers and thus can evade government regulations. Of the top 100 economies, 51 are corporations! The top 200 corporations account for more than 25% of the world's economy. The body that sets the global economic agenda is a private club, where

ministers from sovereign nations are often excluded, and if invited it is at the discretion of the World Economic Forum [WEF] organisers.

Due to their increasing reach and presence, they need to be engaged. There is a need for non-judicial processes and responses for restoration of rights and inclusion. The present dominant ideology has demonised the state and portrays the private sector as the panacea for everything. True, the state is bad, and has seldom delivered. But the solution is not to replace the lawless state with law-breaking and lawless TNCs. Mechanisms have been developed to deal with the state. Similarly, mechanisms need to be developed to engage TNCs, and cover them within the ambit of the human rights framework. Unfortunately most advocacy is fighting the last war with outdated weapons.

■ **Increasing evidence of the limitations of tools of measurement.**

There are no tools to measure the complexities of life. The Human Development Report and other indicators that try to give a better snapshot of reality supplement the World Development Report. Most of the tools we have are developed for an industrial era. The tools for a service economy are just developed and understood. However, there are no tools to correctly assess pre-industrial societies.

This leads to rather farcical situations. A dead tree has a value—the price of its timber. A live tree --- nothing. The agricultural land has got no inherent value, only the last three market transactions. They simply do not show up in the GDP. When the economy has little or no monetary component, then this 'value' becomes even more farcical when translated into monetary equivalents. When transferred to a non-monetary economy, this goes to extremes. The biodiversity of the forests have no value—except when industrially exploited. Its integral part of the indigenous medicinal systems has no value. The forests have values only to be exchanged for pollution credits.

Infrastructure and development are not 'for all' as the assumption goes. The people did not have the words or the idiom to express what they instinctively knew. The dominant took advantage of this. However, now they are not so gullible. They expect fair compensation. If they don't, most often someone comes along who 'instigates' them into 'creating law and order problems' to claim their due.

3. The present is non-negotiable

For any policy or programme to have legitimacy, it must have these basic components, all of them demonstrated:

■ **Respect for human rights.**

It should meet the standards set out by the international bill of rights [UDHR, ICCPR, ICSECR]. It needs to take into account the advances in human rights such as ICERD, CEDAW, CRC, and the declaration on involuntary displacement and discrimination.

■ **All human rights for all, at all times.**

This is a radical departure from the earlier governing philosophy—greatest good for the greatest number—used with devastating effect as an instrument of exclusion, exploit and appropriation giving rise to the classic cycle of resources—repression—revolt. Now the world has the normative framework, the communications capacity, the technical know-how and the financial resources to meet the most pressing needs and to fulfil the rights of all, at all times. Increasingly, citizens expect nothing less.

■ **Good governance.**

It is not enough if the project or state respects human rights. It should be transparent, accountable, and inclusive to those affected by it. People now want to be informed decision makers. Though they may have little interest, or even welcome the project wholeheartedly, they would still like to give their informed consent.

4. Shaping Mindspace

The dominant media determines the determining images of the world. The dominant institutions of the world, namely capital and the institutions of international capital, in turn control this media: the IMF, the World Bank, WTO and the transnational corporate sector. This engine of [this] globalisation is the market, and is for the enhancement of capital. Even in the best case, it leads to healthy balance sheets and unhealthy populations. Terming them as collateral damage for development dismisses the effect on the life of the people, and this development is defined solely as the enhancement of capital. The new world order, in which this globalisation of capital enhancement is the sole purpose of life itself—all life, both plant and animal—and indeed the very purpose of existence of even inanimate parts of the universe, is sought to be promoted as the 'natural order of things' akin to the divine right of kings. The dominant media portray this order as a given, as one in which only a few resist this onslaught of capitalism and exploit, but one which has brought undreamt of prosperity to most, if not all the inhabitants of the earth. Despite the very vigorous opposition from domestic constituencies, there is unrelenting pressure by the west on the developing countries to fall in line.

But this is a very small part of the global picture. People everywhere are resisting this model that views people and the very universe as mere means to enhancing capital. People all over the world are being hurt—and in increasing numbers—by this phenomenon. Even George Soros, one of the foremost beneficiaries of global capital, has been forced to warn that 'there comes a time when the pain of the periphery will affect the centre'—and this before the attack on the World Trade Centre in USA on 11 September 2001.

In discussions on poverty and the effects of discrimination, there are often debates on the methodology and the conclusions. There is debate on the veracity of the data and its interpretation. In the debate, it is often forgotten that behind these rather clinically antiseptic data are real people who are hurt, who pay the price, and who, despite all that is thrown at them, still survive and keep the world moving. This human cost is buried under mountains of data, often deliberately. Moreover, the meaning of this data is also interpreted and put into the global consciousness by intermediaries—often those with an interest in maintaining the present status quo and perpetuating the myth of the 'inevitability' of global capital domination and the 'victory of capital' in the post-cold war era.

5. Globalisation of people to people links and solidarity

Till recently, the links across boundaries were often only between states. The improvement in communication technology has made it possible for common citizens to have solidarity links. This has enabled citizens right across the world to demand more from their governments. However, even today, while solidarity of the powerful is legitimate, the solidarity of the dominated is illegal and delegitimised. Support infrastructure needs to be restored or built to create a critical mass to counter the dominant. It requires creating empowering ideologies and structures to propagate and embed these ideologies. As many experiences prove, it is well within the solidarity of the excluded. It only requires the creation of infrastructure and constructing the requisite mindscape and mindscape.

Global solidarity is vital in a world of global markets and hegemony—specially with identity politics used to delegitimise solidarity. The first decade of the new millennium has seen the increased participation of world citizens in setting the agenda of the world. The rise of global civil society, 'middle-classing' of leadership has seen increased attention being paid to human rights. This global citizenship is forming increased links—the bottom up globalisation that is so vital for solidarity. The formal space for this global civil society has increased, with global institutions according space for civil society organisations.

The poor can often manage by themselves locally. It is the solidarity of the rich globally—the solidarity of global capital and the global elite—that makes life difficult for them. The poor do not

have the resources to make these global solidarity links. The forum will help make links beyond the local. It would provide impetus to attaining material and non-material resources required to make these links.

At the forum, there should be sufficient work on creating and retaining mindspace. It would create appropriate ideological frameworks for empowerment of the excluded, and space for action within the dominant structures. Therefore, these testimonies will be supplemented by an audio-visual exhibition and supporting text and data of appropriate depth presented simply. This will largely deflect the charges of 'emotionalism' that is sure to be cast on the forum.

6. The Objectives of the Forum

The People's Voices forum is a celebration of life. It expands the horizon of resistance through a celebration of life by recognising the human rights of peoples and persons, as against glorification of interests [money, markets, profits]. The forum will primarily be an opportunity for the victims—either individual or community—who are facing and struggling against the negative impacts of globalisation, to speak for themselves. This is, in itself, a very potent instrument for countering the conspiracy of silence that promotes the myth of consensus of the 'peoples of the world' being 'pro-globalisation.' It will shatter the walls of silence that keep people invisible, and turn the light on the violations of international standards of human rights that is made possible due to such silence. It will put names and faces to these people who literally keep the world moving by absorbing the costs of capital enhancement and providing the services that oil the wheels of 'national' development. It is part of the arsenal of the global human rights movement, including the UN High Commission for Human Rights, to bring human rights abuses to the notice of the conscientious citizenry: naming and shaming.

The objectives are simple and straightforward. The forum will:

- Give names and faces to the statistics and 'collateral damage' of market-led and capital centric globalisation
- Make the marginalised and their struggles visible, so that they cannot be wished away or ignored.
- Make their contribution to making the life standards of the rich—the so-called 'mainstream' and 'international community'—possible, through their sustained labour. It will convincingly dispel myths of them being expendable, exploitable or excluded—except in short-term benefits—of the life of the world.
- Assert the right of the marginalised to a life with dignity, and their ownership of the resources of this earth.
- Highlight that their life-struggles to maintain a life in harmony with nature and fellow beings are a clear assertion 'Another World is Possible' where the primacy of human rights and dignity for all is being demonstrated despite the continuing assault of global capital in their life and livelihood systems.
- Send out a clear message that despite all the hardships, these people still celebrate life. This celebration of life cannot be appropriated or crushed by market forces.
- Invite the protagonists of market forces to join in this celebration of life. It will demonstrate a people-centric paradigm where it is possible to live life as a celebration in contrast to a life where consolidation of capital and profits robs all life of contentment and dignity.

Ms S Mangamma

*the brutality and complicity of the State and
the World Bank in privatisation*

Andhra Pradesh is showcased as the model for economic reforms by pro-reformers. The World Bank documents talk of 'Good governance based on democracy'. But the Andhra Pradesh episode proves that structural adjustment policies promoted by the Bank actually erode democracy and the democratic rights of the people. Governments like one in Andhra Pradesh became accountable to the World Bank and not to the people they were elected to serve. The Andhra Pradesh people have shown that the Indian people will not accept the assaults on their lives and livelihood and will definitely fight back. Women formed an important contingent of the struggle.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the American Imperials used their tools—the World Bank and the IMF—to impose their hegemony on the world. As the Indian Government approached them for loans, they started grabbing the people's fundamental rights under the name of conditionalities. Curbs started on minimum facilities like health and education. Public sector was under blatant threat. Many lost their jobs throwing their families and children on to the streets. When they realised the situation, people started revolting against the State and Central governments.

In February 1999, the government of Andhra Pradesh, India signed two agreements with the World Bank—one for restructuring the State economy and the second for restructuring the power sector. These agreements were kept secret from its people. As per the second agreement Rs.60,000 million is earmarked for restructuring the power sector in a six year period in five instalments. The restructuring agreement is for privatising the entire power sector, with the purpose of inviting MNCs to come in. The interest on the loan is fixed at 12.5 per cent per annum which is three times the current international lending rate and higher than the prevailing bank rates in India. The loan is to be repaid in dollars. When the exchange rate goes up, which has been the case, the repayment instalments will automatically increase. With the erosion of the value of the Rupee it may happen that by the time the entire loan is repaid the government would be paying twice the amount as debt repayments!

Destroying the public sector

At present the major power generation and distribution is done by the State owned Andhra Pradesh Electricity Board. In spite of several government concessions, power generation by the private sector is meagre yet the profit margin is thirty to forty percent because of the high power purchase rates the government is giving them. For example, in the government owned plants the unit cost of production is Rs.1.17 for thermal power, and Rs. 0.21 for hydel power. The government pays private companies from Rs 2.35 to Rs 4.00 per unit. While the public sector Bharat Heavy Electrical Ltd charge for the erection of power plants is Rs.20 million for a specific amount of power generated, the government prefers to give it to the private sector for Rs.40 million for the same amount of power generated. At the same time the government has cut down on expenditure for power generation to just 0.8 per cent of the State's GDP on power generation. It spends more money purchasing power from neighbouring States.

These are the root cause of the so-called crisis. The remedy surely lies in generating more power through government plants, which is far cheaper and increasing budgetary allotment for maintenance and improved machinery and preventing high losses in distribution. Reforms would also mean forcing industrial houses, which are the biggest users of electricity as well as the defaulters in paying electricity bills to clear the huge arrears in bills. On the contrary accepting the World Bank logic the government has set out to destroy the government power sector.

The first target is the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Board. As per the conditionalities of the agreement the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Board has been trifurcated into Generation Company (Genco), Transmission Company (Transco) and Distribution Company (Districo). This splitting has been done to facilitate the transfer of these companies to private companies.

The Tariff Regulatory Commission has been established to fix tariff. The most shocking condition is that the Commission is mandated to fix tariffs in the month of March every year with an increase of a minimum of 15 percent. This goes against all so-called free market norms pushed by the Bank according to which price is determined supposedly by supply and demand. Here the price is to be artificially hiked regardless of the cost so that private companies can benefit through huge profits. The value of the generating plants of the public sector has been deliberately kept low so that the private sector can buy government property dirt-cheap.

Government raises power tariffs

Implementing the conditions of the World Bank for hikes in power tariffs, the government made a huge increase in the power rates in May 2000. The newly formed Electricity Regulatory Commission announced the first hikes. For agriculture, the hike is to the order of 60 percent and for domestic consumers as much as 100 per cent. In Andhra Pradesh 60 per cent of agriculture is dependent on pump sets using power. Agriculture in Rayalaseema and Telengana, (two backward regions) where gravitational irrigation is meagre, is solely dependent on electricity for irrigation. Andhra Pradesh farmers have already suffered grave consequences of liberalisation policies, which had seen the retreat of the government from providing even minimum facilities for farmers. Cotton and groundnut farmers have faced huge price fluctuations for their produce. In some areas adulterated pesticides had led to destruction of crops. Over the last few years about 200 farmers have committed suicide. The hike in electricity rates could not have come at a worse time for the agricultural community.

Similarly the poorer sections and lower middle class families who use the least electricity—between 50 and 200—units were badly hit. The increased rates for use between 51 to 100 units is from Rs. 1.20p a unit to Rs. 2.95; from 101 units to 200 units the hike is from Rs. 1.45 to Rs. 2.95. A hutment dweller using one or two bulbs has to pay one hundred rupees more. Some families found that they would have to pay electricity charges that exceed house rents. Middle class families using some electrical gadgets have found that whereas they were paying about Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 on an average a month in electricity bills, after the hike the bills came to Rs. 600 to Rs.700. As a result there is pressure on the women who are doing all the domestic work to stop using time and labour saving gadgets like mixies, grinding machines and so on. Incidents of related domestic violence were also reported to women's organisations like AIDWA. Women related work burdens have grown. Since the income has not increased the only way to manage is to cut down on the use of electricity, they said. In many households, when they were the only ones at home, women have stopped using fans, even in the height of summer. In such situations it is they who are being the most penalised.

The hike came in the wake of the administered price increase of other essential commodities like cooking gas, kerosene, rice which in any case had broken the back of most poor household budgets. Small enterprises like barbershops, small rice mills, flour grinding and so on found the hikes so prohibitive that they would have to close down. Many small enterprises have closed down leading to increased unemployment. In some cases hugely inflated bills were given. In one case the owner of a small power printing press was given a bill of Rs. 180,486 whereas the usual bill was only Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000!

Struggle against power tariff and restructuring programme

In May 2000 the Commission announced public hearings on the proposal to raise power tariffs. This was nothing but a cynical move to make it appear that the public also had a role in policy making. The peasant's organisations appeared before the commission to oppose the hikes. The representatives were shocked to find that representatives of the World Bank were sitting in on the hearings. It was reminiscent of the colonial days. The CPI(M) organised a big protest. It was the beginning of the

struggle. Ignoring the issues raised by several organisations, the Regulatory Commission announced the hike. A wave of anger swept the state. The leadership of the struggle was given by a united platform of nine left parties. They called for the participation of all sections of the people. Responding to the public anger trade unions, peasant organisations, students and youth all joined. AIDWA too actively joined the struggle. Meanwhile, the main opposition party in AP, the Congress also gave a separate call to oppose the power hike.

The day after the hike was declared, on 28 May 2000, the All India Democratic Women's Association along with the Agricultural Workers Union organised sit-in protests. In Vijaywada town where the ruling party was holding its conference, AIDWA members along with other organisations blocked roads in protest. This was met with a cane charge. Protest demonstrations were held throughout the state on 29 and 30 May 2000. In the face of the mounting protest, the government announced that it would reduce the hikes to the extent of Rs. 2810 million—but the burden still amounted to a whopping Rs. 7910 million. The protests therefore continued. The entire state was galvanised into action.

June and July 2000 saw a series of people's actions on the demands to withdraw the hikes. The several phases of the struggle and numerous methods and symbols encouraged mass participation. Picketing of electricity offices and mass signature campaigns marked the early phase. Thousands of activists, including women's squads, went on a door-to-door campaign in which hundreds of thousands of signatures were collected. The government aware of the spontaneous response to the campaign started holding meetings with electricity consumers at the village levels, promising to regularise connections. However, this move backfired because the meetings became virtual peoples courts with the consumers angrily demanding an explanation for the price hikes. In village after village people gathered to condemn the hikes, passing resolutions for its withdrawal in the meetings sponsored by the government itself.

Processions, jathas, hunger strikes at the mandal level followed by militant gheraos of Ministers, including the Chief Minister marked the second phase of the movement. There was a huge demonstration and street blockades by farmers. Students and youth participated in large numbers. As the momentum of the movement picked up so did the police repression. Everyday the newspapers reported police cane charges and arrests of demonstrators in different corners of the State.

The Left parties supported by other organisations like AIDWA conducted a referendum on the issue of electricity tariff increases. Nearly half a million people actually cast their votes in 395 voting centres. 96.73 percent cast their votes against the increased rates. The referendum was conducted at main centres like railway stations, bus stands, and all sections of the population participated. Following the referendum, the left parties gave a call to the people not to pay their electricity bills.

The public participation unnerved the government. It attempted its own public campaign through the announcements of a series of programmes and assurances designed to divert the attention of the people from the electricity hikes. In particular, the government started organising a series of 'Janmbhoomi' programmes including a week of special programmes for women. The government turned its attention to programmes to influence women because of the unprecedented participation of women in the struggle.

The supreme sacrifice

Sri S. Ramakrishna was the eldest of four children born to Sri Sattenapally Venkataiah and Yasodamma of Gudurupadu village in Khammam rural mandal. Venkataiah's family migrated to Nizampet locality in Khammam town. They took up washing and ironing cloths. Though Ramakrishna completed only primary education, he started getting involved in social service activities.

Soon he became the leader of Khammam people. He led a number of struggles for getting house sites to oppressed sections. Due to these struggles many people were able to get pattas [title deeds] for their house sites. Most of the time Ramakrishna used to help the people in getting good medical aid at the Government Hospital. Always with a smile, he used to attend to people's problems and

became their beloved leader. As the washer community is one of the most oppressed sections in the society, being a member of that community, Ramakrishna studied the day-to-day problems faced by the community. In the villages most of the washer men are victims of many atrocities by local feudal landlords.

Along with the rise of cost of all commodities, the rates of soaps, detergents, lime, and caustic soda have reached the sky. Even in the hot sun these people have to take the dirty cloths on their heads for much longer distances in search of water. The government does not provide any water facilities or dhobi ghats. For trivial and unnecessary reasons like clothes are not washed 'properly' or delayed, the landlords used to beat and insult them. Even women are not spared insults and atrocities. There is no safety in doing their profession. As the clothes of patients suffering from severe diseases also have to be washed, many washer men contract these diseases. During floods many washer men lose their lives.

When the state government started implementing the World Bank imposed new economic policies, Ramakrishna came forward to mobilize the community and in short time became their leader. As the washer men's association state leader he shifted his family to Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh—and into the power hike resistance.

The power hike resistance movement continued for more than 100 days in Andhra Pradesh. On 28 August 2000, the AP state government took severe repressive measures which took the lives of three people including many severely injured. As a protest, many people gathered for 'Chalo Assembly' Even before the procession could reach the cordon, the police started beating the veteran left party leaders who led the procession and also the women in the front. Simultaneously police started using water cans and teargas shells and cane charge. The police started firing without any prior warning. Two people, Bala Swamy and Vishnu Vardhan Reddy, died on the spot. S. Ramakrishna who had gone to rescue women protesters being cane charged was thrown on a barbed wire cordon and beaten black and blue. Immediately he was rushed to the local Apollo Hospital by his followers where he was treated for 10 days in vain. He was declared dead on 8 September 2000.

The government was so merciless that it did not even hospitalise him nor compensate the bereaved family. Ramakrishna's wife Manga who was three months pregnant at the time of the incident, gave birth to a girl child. Manga and her tender child along with Ramakrishna's old parents are the live examples of the impact of globalisation. They, along with many others have taken a pledge a end this ghastly menace.

The state government, in spite of several requests, did not assist the victims. Even when the deceased were the only breadwinners for their families, the government did not extend any help to them. Progressive political parties managed to collect some money from the people as donations and distributed that amount to their respective families. AIDWA has submitted a memorandum to the NHRC requesting an inquiry.

The agitation against hike in power tariff is far from over. On the contrary, the struggle against the electricity hike has got linked to the current crisis, which has gripped agriculture in the state. With the implementation of the conditions of the WTO and the free import of highly subsidised food grains at lower prices the Indian farmer faces ruin.

The struggle in AP now enters a new phase.

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Dedlibai Vasave

the Adivasi and peasant communities of the Narmada valley in their struggle against the World Bank and international capital

In 1985, the World Bank entered the Narmada Valley by approving a loan for US\$450 million for construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, in Gujarat, India. This was soon followed and supported by Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited, OECF (Japanese Bilateral Lending Agency), ODA (UK), and KFW (Germany)

Tribals and peasants from a 250 km stretch of the Narmada River Valley stood to lose their entire livelihood resources and socio-economic fabric due to submergence of their homes, farms and forests resulting from a large dam, Sardar Sarovar. Comprising 200,000 families in 245 villages, the community is socially and economically diverse, consisting of tribal people in 55 villages of all three states, and as non-tribal people of various caste and class backgrounds in the remaining 190 villages, in Madhya Pradesh. The majority of the affected people depend on agriculture for their sustenance and livelihood. A substantial number also depend on fisheries. In addition, the tribals depend on forest resources for fuel, fodder, supplementary nourishment, medicinal products, and income from minor forest produce.

Loss of their land, forest and water resources would mean devastation for this community. As no plans for rehabilitation were disclosed, the communities faced the certainty of displacement without rehabilitation, in short homelessness and unemployment, if the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Project, being financed by the World Bank, went ahead.

Nature and extent of damages

The World Bank funding, which was only 5% of the project cost, was approved in 1985 even before the Government of India had cleared the project through the Planning Commission. The World Bank loan pushed the project, known as Sardar Sarovar, on the river Narmada, to being sanctioned at the cost of complete impact assessment, economic and financial analysis, and even democratic and legal processes of planning.

The displacement of more than 45,000 families, as is recognized today, was not even fully counted when the project received its clearance. 38,000 hectares of forest and 40,000 hectares of land, much of it prime agricultural land, is to be taken a toll of. Environment management and compensation plans, however, are not complete, nor is the compliance with whatever plans are afoot, achieved. All this environmental impact again is to affect the livelihoods of farmers, fishworkers, and forest-dwellers, both in the upstream and the downstream. Even with a progressive looking rehabilitation policy, there is no plan to allocate alternative land for more than 35,000 families that remain to be rehabilitated.

All this could have been guessed and assessed before the project was approved under the indigenous law and aid granted by the World Bank. This was not done. The result is that the dam was pushed ahead in violation of the Bank's own policy, as well as the rehabilitation policy under the Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal Award, the main legal basis for the project. Thousands of adivasi (tribal) families are thus to be uprooted without the land for land provision being implemented. Those shifted out but not yet rehabilitated cannot be provided with solace through Grievance Redressal as the governments are openly declaring non-availability of land.

Apart from the reservoir affected, there are thousands of families already affected or to be affected by the project related infrastructure, that includes the project colony, built since 1961, and a huge

canal network, seriously affecting more than 23,500 families. The compensatory afforestation work for the project will affect the forest cultivation of the Adivasis outside the submergence zone to whom land rights are not granted, and their encroacher status is deliberately perpetuated. The downstream impacts would affect not less than 10,000 fishworkers for whom there is no rehabilitation plan. The sanctuary, an environmental compensation measure, also is to evict or deprive not less than 40,000 people, cutting their access to the forest which is reserved and controlled by the state. They have no place to go.

Impacts on the command area lands which too are unsurveyed, are anticipated to be prone to water logging and salination. Health impacts, in the form of water-borne diseases, may increase in some places, not only in the river bank area where malaria is rampant, but also in the beneficiary area.

Other impacts on the environment, if considered in the broader sense, are interlinked with economic impacts which are not evaluated and hence not included in the cost-benefit analysis. The World Commission on Dams has found that large reservoirs emit carbons and contribute to global warming.

Even from the time such a dam is declared and an area slated for submergence, the social standing of the affected people suffers and this is reflected in many ways.

- **Social:** It is difficult for young people to marry. No one wants to marry someone whose land is going to be submerged.
- **Economic:** Loss of access to forest resources, increased harassment from forest officials. Often people pay various fines and fees for which the forest officer gives no receipt—outright looting the tribals.
- **Ecological:** Deforestation, because the region was declared for submergence, the forest department cut trees and sold them. People have noticed rise in temperature.
- **Health:** Loss of fresh water sources, exposure to more polluted and stagnant water, need to walk further for fetching drinking water daily. There is also breakdown of traditional medical and healing systems, since medicinal herbs, roots, barks, etc came from the forest, which has now disappeared.
- **Nutrition** is affected as many fruits and nuts that were once available in the forest are lost. Those whose farms have already begun to submerge face crop loss and shortage every year. Those who have started cultivating upper lands after farms were submerged are considered encroachers and harassed by forest officials.
- **Security:** Due to the insecure future, prospect of homelessness and landlessness, the area has become ripe for antisocial elements.

The land and forest in the communities of the victims and other surrounding village communities is already partially affected and hence has affected the access to water in the river / reservoir. Customary sources of drinking water have been submerged, compelling people to travel further for drinking water and exposing children and cattle to stagnant and unclean water.

Apart from the human rights violations, the project, till date, is an ongoing story of umpteen number of violations of the Tribal Self-rule Act in India.

Resistance

There has been an united struggle from the local to global level seeking information about the project, its purpose, cost-benefit, extent of displacement and plans for rehabilitation, for the last 17 years. When satisfactory answers were not available, the people took to various mass actions, including rallies, sit-ins, fasts, etc, but also public hearings and other forms of civil mobilisation, dissemination

and action. Both the World Bank and the governments concerned were questioned through a perseverant, multifaceted strategy and a mass movement that included many supporters and catalysts from various walks of life within the country and strong international network of experts, activists, writers, researchers and others at the international level. The political processes at the legislature were resorted to and one or another of the state governments was compelled to stand by the people.

Time and again, the people confronted the World Bank, which financed the project in violation of its own guidelines regarding environment and resettlement. Eventually the people compelled the Bank to call for an Independent Review, for the first time in the history of a Bank sponsored project. As the report vindicated the position of the people's movement, NBA, the Bank was made to withdraw its funding. Appointment of an independent panel on the World Bank was partly a result of the struggle that continued to benefit the project-affected people from various bank-aided projects even today.

The Narmada Action Committee was also effective in challenging other global agencies such as OECF (Japanese Bilateral Lending Agency), ODA (UK), and KFW (Germany). All these other agencies withdrew before the World Bank finally withdrew after an eight year long struggle, in 1993.

Establishment of the World Commission on Dams was a logical end of a long process that challenged the World Bank's pro-large dam policy, its processes of intervention, and support, and has produced a more or less unanimous report with guidelines for development planning in water, energy, and other sectors.

A number of small issue based legal actions were taken from 1986 to 1994. Thereafter, a major case was filed in the Apex Court of India. The dam work was suspended through an interim decision of the Court from 1995 to 1999. The final judgement in 2000 approved the project in principle, but with precondition related to resettlement and environment. The piecemeal construction and raise in the height thereafter has brought in serious impacts—social and environmental, but the dam remains stopped at 95 metres, based on the Court's judgement, even today, while the final planned height is 139 metres.

A large network of support groups with representatives of people's organisations and individuals from various walks of life has remained a strength of the movement's outreach. The coordination of not less than 30 support groups and a continuous mobilisation and involvement of hundreds of small and large organisations give the movement a national form and status. At the international level, Narmada Action Committee, with one nodal agency raising the issue in a country, formed the main network that challenged the World Bank and ultimately compelled it to withdraw.

Using the various democratic channels and platforms from local government to the United Nations, was a part of the multifaceted strategy. That was necessarily based on the movements wider ideological perspective which went beyond issues related to a single large dam and incorporated an alternative vision of water and natural resource management on the one hand, and equitable and sustainable development planning on the other.

The project affected form the main core of the mass strength. However, the appeal was much beyond only those directly affected to the larger civil society. There were long-term indefinite mass actions. The peak periods were during long-term hunger strikes, as well as Satyagraha—insistence on truth—action of facing the rising water whenever it entered a house in violation of the law and policy.

The state continues to be insensitive and non-sensible. It has gone along with the premise of globalisation, giving priority to foreign investments over the law of the land. Moreover, when the World Bank decided to withdraw, which was a rational response to the review that it had commissioned, the state decided to continue the project, demonstrating callousness beyond that of the global lending agencies.

Our demands

While more than 9000 families are at the resettlement sites, hundreds of them are yet to receive full entitlements, especially the duly provided land for resettlement. The real question is whether or not and where would the remaining 40,000 families be rehabilitated, with what land, and at what cost, and when? Will the dam be pushed ahead every time by five or few metres, submerging the houses and fields of the Adivasis and farmers, as it has happened till the last monsoon, with no compensation paid?

The dam remains stopped, no doubt, while the impacts on the command area, including the unjust distribution of waters, upsetting the proposed allocation at the cost of the drought-affected in favour of the urban-industrial megalopolis in the state of Gujarat. There has been no international funding since the World Bank has withdrawn, nor has the plan to privatise the hydropower project of Sardar Sarovar come true. But within the country, raising funds through open market, and ad-hoc large-scale allocation of financial resources to this single project, has wrought financial havoc for the economy of Gujarat, and the conflict between the states continues.

The people demand

- That the concerned governments of all three states, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat must immediately have a complete rehabilitation plan for all the remaining oustees and commit not to push ahead the dam till such plan is complied within a just and fair manner to the satisfaction of all parties.
- A complete review of the dam and the wider Narmada Valley Development Project (with 30 large and 135 medium dams) affecting not less than 2.5 million people, rich natural resources, and investing colossal funds is necessary through an independent, interdisciplinary body at whatever level within each state and at the national level.
- The World Bank, that was responsible for pushing the project ahead and in a sense, the present mess, must acknowledge its mistake and take responsibility for the worst social and environmental impacts that have occurred and may occur. It should play its role by making such a position public and conveying to the Indian government that the Bank is legally responsible even today, since its funds have gone into the project and the loans still to be repaid.

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Mastuq Lambardar

the Van Gujjar Community and the impact of the world bank eco-development project on nomadic forest communities

I am Mastuq Lambardar. I belong to the indigenous, nomadic Van Gujjar community residing in the forest areas at the foothills of the Shivaliks near Haridwar in Uttaranchal. We follow Islam. Though our religion permits us to be non-vegetarians, we do not eat meat in keeping with our close relationship with the forests and wildlife.

Traditionally, all of us Van Gujjars depend upon the rearing of buffaloes for milk. During the summers, we migrate to the Himalayas (to very high altitudes) where the bugyals (grasslands) were a source of excellent fodder for our livestock. During the winters we came down to the Shivaliks and lop the trees for fodder. Each of us keeps as much belongings as we can carry on our heads or on our horses and nothing more. When we migrate, we do so with our entire family and livestock. In fact, it is our buffaloes who decide when to migrate and we just follow them with the oldest buffalo leading the way. (A Swedish lady had come to do some research with us and I am told that she has also named her book as "At the tale of the buffalo").

This trans-humanic way of life of ours had evolved to maintain a sustainable way of life so, that we do not put pressure upon the forests and at the same time fulfil the fodder requirements of our buffaloes. We have been staying in these forests for generations much before the forest department was even formed. For staying in the forests we pay taxes to the forest officials (ever since the British period) in the form of grazing tax, lopping tax etc. Moreover, we also have to pay bribes—the unofficial 'tax'!—to the forest officials, in the form of ghee, milk, butter and at times even in cash.

However, the government proposed to declare the forest areas in the Shivaliks, where we reside, as a National Park. For this the government declared their intentions to create this area into a national park in 1983 (Proposed Rajaji National Park). Since the final notification has not been issued, this is only a Proposed National Park. But the authorities claim that this is a 'National Park.' Since 1983, the way of life of our community has been disrupted and we are facing a number of problems and constraints. The forest officials are trying to force us to move out of the forests and stay at a resettlement colony at a place called Pathri, far-far away from our forests. But why should we leave our homes and stay at an alien place? Why doesn't the government ask us what we want to do rather than imposing their will on us? Was this resettlement colony constructed with our approval and consent? These are some of the common questions that often cross my mind and I feel very bitter about them.

Our community possesses excellent silvicultural knowledge and we nurture the trees as our children. When we lop the trees we make sure that we do not impede the growth of the tree and for us lopping is like cutting the hair of a person. We lop the trees just before leaf fall and we lop them on a rotational basis so that we do not put pressure on a particular tree. In fact, our trans-humanic way of life is a means of reducing the pressure on the forests and to allow the vegetation to grow during the monsoons. But just because the government can get money from the World Bank to implement Project Elephant or Project Tiger we are being displaced from our homes. World Bank means a bank for the entire world, but since we are being displaced due to the World Bank therefore perhaps that means that the Van Gujjars and their buffaloes not a part of the 'WORLD'. I am not sure whether these projects are actually going to benefit the elephant or the tiger but I am quite sure that they will benefit the forest officials.

I had first come to know about something such as globalisation in 1992 when the forest officials told us that in a place called Rio, in some foreign country, the Prime Ministers of all countries had a meeting. The forest people told me and all my Van Gujjar brothers and sisters that in this meeting a decision was taken to throw all forest people out of the forests. Therefore we were told that we should also go out of the forests. This made all of us afraid. We asked them if something could be done to prevent this from happening. The officials told us that they could allow us in, but at personal

risk. Thus, instead of the usual rate of 1 kg of ghee per milking animal each month and 1 kg of milk per day for each animal, they need to double the bribe and for the grass, Salami (literal meaning salute for the grass) instead of Rs.30 per animal, they now needed Rs. 80 per animal. The 'Rio payment', as this came to be known, is paid till date. So this is an example of what globalisation has meant for us.

Twenty-five years ago, myself and 20 Van Gujjar colleagues were provided with agricultural land in Kunnao area of the proposed park, and in lieu, our permits to transhumance to the Himalayas were cancelled. We have worked hard in our fields to make them suitable for cultivation. However, due to the eco-development programme being supported by the World Bank, today all of us are being told by forest officials to move out of the area and resettle elsewhere. This has seriously jeopardised our livelihoods since the cancellation of our permits means that we cannot rear our buffaloes. Now the land is also being taken away.

In the name of globalisation our community is facing the threat of eviction from our traditional forest homes. In the past, we have been coerced, even physically abused, so that we move out of the forests and resettle at a place called Pathri where houses have been built for us. There are 27 villages inside the park area but it is only the Van Gujjars who are being coerced. There are nearly 105 villages at the periphery of the park. The villagers from these villages make regular use of park resources but nothing has been done against them. The Irrigation Department, the Hydel department, Indian Army, UPSEB (UP State Electricity Board) and other government departments occupy parts of the proposed park area. There is even a railway line running through the park, due to which a number of elephants meet their deaths. We were targeted because we were "soft targets". We are a minority as we are nomads. In fact, we are a 'minority amongst minority' as we are Muslims amongst the nomads.

However, we have also decided not to leave our homes (forests) and Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra has supported us in our cause. With help from the organisation we appealed to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and NHRC gave the order (Consent Order dated 15/03/99) that Van Gujjars cannot be forced to move out of the forests and that the government should appoint a retired district judge to ascertain the willingness of the community. This order provided much support to us. However, recently the forest officials told the NHRC that they wanted to appoint the sitting district judge and the NHRC consented to this. However, in practice, these days, forest officials come with their lawyer and a person who claims to be the District Judge (who we now understand is a notary) and try to misguide us.

With support from RLEK we have formed community organisations and today all of us collectively fight against the corrupt practices of the forest officials. RLEK has also provided education to us and made us aware about the various laws relating to the forests and the rights of the forest dwellers and we feel much empowered. The organisation has also provided us with wireless sets for communication. Through these wireless sets we talk to each other in times of emergency such as forest fires, poaching or when any of our community member needs urgent medical aid.

All of us feel that the best to take care of the interests of the forests, wildlife and the communities is to do that in the way our community has been managing the forests in the past. We want to manage the forests based upon our traditional knowledge and our close association with the forests. We are confident that we can be the best managers of our forests.

Mastuq Lambardar is an 80 year old leader of the Van Gujjars. Being nomads, they have no fixed address. They can be contacted through RLEK... or their wireless sets.

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Mamankadawala Piyaratne Thero

the manifest evil of privatisation in Eppawala, Sri Lanka

In 1971 the Geological and Mines Bureau discovered vast deposits of phosphate, ranging from 25 to 60 million metric tons, in the Eppawala village of Talawa A.G.A. Division in the administrative district of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.

In 1997, the People's Alliance government came into agreement with a US based company Freeport-McMoran be permitted to mine, refine and export 40,000 metric tons of the highest-grade phosphate fertiliser annually for 10 years. This American conglomerate negotiated with the Sri Lankan government to purchase rights to a 56 square kilometer region around Eppawala, and a 675 sq. kilometre 'buffer zone' around that. They wanted to turn this area which is home to more than 12,000 farmer families, pristine forest, countless endangered species and extensive 2000 year old archaeological preserves, monuments and irrigation tanks and canals into a gigantic phosphate strip mine.

Scholars, scientists, journalists and environmentalists have actually identified a wide range of negative consequences which would result from the proposed scheme. In summary form they include:

- Displacement of people: an estimated 40,000 people in 12,000 families reside in the initial exploration zone, some 500,000 reside in the 'buffer zone'.
- Creation of dangerous by-products: carcinogenic dusts and waste rock, noise, toxic run-off, pollution of ground water.
- Disruption of Jayaganga: six miles of the 'Giant's Canal' or 'River of Victory' will be compromised by this project, while the proximity of mining operations to the canal will pollute the entire waterworks of the region; the intricate social, natural and technological networks which sustains the entire Kalawewa Jayaganga Water and Soil Conservation Ecosystem will be disrupted. This system is 1500 years old and the entire natural and social world of the region relies on it.
- Destruction of the natural habitat of countless species of endangered animals, plants and reptiles.
- Destruction of archaeological sites.
- Destruction of 12,000 homes, 32 schools, 4 banks numerous temples and churches, hospitals and dispensaries.
- Environmental consequences to Trincomalee: the proposed mining agreement set aside hundreds of acres of land on Trincomalee Harbour for processing and shipping facilities. Dumping and seeping of toxic chemical by-products into the Indian Ocean.

Legal action taken

The sole justification for this extremely 'anti-national arrangement' is apparently the presence of certain impurities, which would prevent our own Sri Lankan authorities to refine and export these valuable mineral fertiliser deposits for the want of scientific know-how and requisite technology.

The normal tender procedure has been dispensed with through an 'unnatural and arbitrary' administrative and executive action, which is almost tantamount to an 'abuse of power' under the Sri Lankan Constitution, and therefore was the subject of a fundamental rights petition to the Supreme Court submitted by certain peasant proprietors of the village of Eppawala.

These petitioners averred that the damage to the environment and the dispossession and displacement of peasant cultivators will be of such vast proportions that the compensation of US\$5 million proposed in the draft agreement is an insignificant fraction of the cost for environment rehabilitation and human resettlement.

Furthermore, the government of Sri Lanka represented by the Mahaweli Authority has given no guarantee of ensuring the resettlement of displaced peasant proprietors because their plans and programmes are more or less already fulfilled.

There are very notorious examples of the irretrievable damage and harm to the environment caused by the rapacious mining of the phosphate deposits in foreign lands, such as the Nauru Island in the Pacific Ocean and over 200,000 acres of farmland in the state of Florida in the United States.

The worst ecological consequences flow from the radioactive by-product of the mining process: radon. The Ministry of Industrial Development has apparently overlooked this vital aspect of the whole subject matter in a 'seemingly big hurry' to commence the project through a foreign multinational corporation, Freeport-McMoran Resource Partners in the United States.

The National Environmental Protection Act No. 47 of 1980 is clear on the matter of damage to the environment and the adverse ecological consequences which flow from unscientific and unplanned exploitation of natural resources, including mineral deposits by human agencies. Yet the Central Environmental Authority, which is an agency of the government of Sri Lanka, seems powerless in the face of tremendous pressure exerted by one of the most powerful ministries, represented by the Ministry of Industrial Development. Hence, the leaders of the local peasant community and organisations submitted a petition on fundamental rights under Article 126 of the Constitution to the Supreme Court in January 1998.

The agreement was designed to permit the project company to exploit the proven quantity of 25 million metric tons of phosphate in Eppawala. Sri Lankan scientists as a body urged on the government that this quantity of phosphate is vitally necessary for the country's own agricultural development, and that foreign parties should be permitted to exploit it only if it can be proved that sufficient reserves exist for the country's future needs.

Nature of resistance

The grassroots Committee to Protect Eppawala Phosphate, led by a charismatic Buddhist monk, the Mamankadawela Piyaratne Thero has been working against this agreement since news of the secret negotiations was first leaked during the early 1990's. The Committee became especially active in 1996 as the PA government resumed its negotiations to hand over the deposits to the Freeport-McMoRan conglomerate.

The first mass protests rally was held in Anuradhapura to correspond to Sri Lanka's 50th Independence Day Celebration. An estimated 20,000 people fasted at the sacred Bodhi Tree. Subsequent rallies have been held at Colombo (February 1998), and in Eppawala (June 1998, December 1998, March 1999, October 1999). The express philosophy of the Committee is non-violent protest based on the example of Gandhian social action. These rallies have included the burning in effigy of the 'Company' and the President of Sri Lanka (labelled 'A Millionaire Plotting to Destroy the Lands of the Poor'). Prior to filing the court case, protests, religious ceremonies and dharna were used as acts of resistance. They were held in Colombo, Eppawala and Anuradhapura. A network was formed including Trade Unions, Political Parties and Civil Society organisations to develop public opinion and launch an international advocacy campaign. An advocacy group 'Americans for Eppawala' has a web site with details of the geographical and human disaster that could be caused if the mining is allowed.

State response

Since the court order upheld the fundamental rights petition quoting a dictum 'that the rulers appointed should protect the wealth of the country' and exposing the irregularities. The then government in power shelved the agreement. However, it can be re-enacted again in this era of globalisation by regimes in Sri Lanka.

People's mobilisation couples with international advocacy and expert knowledge led to pressurising the Sri Lankan government to retract its decision regarding sale of a national asset which had several consequences related to displacement and disaster to environment.

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Epueka

*The villagers in Porsea and their struggle against Inti Indorayon Utama—
PT Toba Lestari Indah, Indonesia*

'Free the arrested villagers!' 'Close down Inti Indo Rayon or Toba Pulp Lestari!', 'Withdraw the police and military from our villages!', 'Stop violence against villagers!' were the yells of demonstrators in front of the Presidential Palace in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, on 23 December 2002. Among the protesters was 58 year old Epueka with her 2-year-old granddaughter. Epueka was among seven delegates of village chiefs from North Sumatra who came to Jakarta to protest the arrest of villagers and demonstrate against reopening the mill.

Epueka was crying during the protest actions, with her grand-daughter in her arms. Her mind was with her daughter, Reverend Sarma Siregar who was among 1000 woman protesters in a protest action on 20 November, 2002 and again more than 3000 people action in Porsea in North Sumatra the day after. The protest action on 21 November 2002 was brutally beaten by a brigade mobile police. Sarma, her husband and 19 villagers were arrested. Around 600 soldiers and police are stationed in Porsea. Hundreds of people are taking refuge in Batak Church headquarters in a town of about 100 kilometres from Porsea because they feel insecure.

They were protesting the decision of the Indonesian government to reopen PT Inti Indorayon Utama (IIU) that was closed down in 1999 after years of protest and violence, often deadly, under a new name, PT Toba Lestari Indah in 2003.

Porsea in North Sumatra, is around three hours by plane from Jakarta and then 6 hours by bus. It is a fertile land, surrounded by hills and mountains with rich water resources for agriculture and inland fishery. The livelihood of 70% of the people in Porsea depended on agriculture, inland fishery, animal husbandry and forest products such as honey, rattan and medicinal plants. Though Epueka has been a widow with 5 sons and 1 daughter for more than 20 years, she could earn a living as a farmer to support her family. The fertile soils of her agricultural land and fish from the river help her survive.

'The life of villagers in Porsea, including my family, changed in 1983 as Inti Indorayon Utama came. I saw much violence against our people who were forced to give up their lands. It was very painful to see my neighbours died due to the landslide and suffer skin disease due to the river pollution. Many women from Porsea, including me, joined the struggle against Inti Indo Rayon. It was a struggle to keep my children and their children's children alive. Closing down Inti Indo Rayon after more than ten years struggle brought hope that life will be normal again. Indeed during the last 4 years when the mill was closed, we could breath fresh air. Our land brought good harvest. I really don't understand why the government allowed the mill to operate again. Didn't they see that we have suffered enough?' Epueka complained in an interview after a protest action in Jakarta.

International business network on pulp that poisoned local people

In 1983 the provincial government of North Sumatra allowed PT. Inti Indorayon Utama (IIU) to open a pulp and rayon mill. IIU is a subsidiary of PT. Raja Garuda Mas, a troublesome company, as the Indonesian part of that foreign direct investment project for pulp and dissolved pulp, materials for making paper. Raja Garuda Mas is part of APRIL (Asia Pacific Resources International Holding Ltd.) which were supported by export credit agencies from UK, Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, USA, and France; and international public and commercial banks such as ING Barings (UK, The Netherlands), UBS Bank (Switzerland), UPM-Kymmene (Finland), and Barclays Bank (UK) with hundreds of million US dollars.

The bankers of the PT. Inti Indorayon Utama were among others: ABN AMRO Bank (the Netherlands), Bank Nomura (Japan), Bank of New York (USA), Credit Lyonnais (France), Fleet Boston Financial Corporation (USA), American Express Bank (USA), Credit Suisse First Boston (USA/Switzerland), Fuji Bank (Japan), Sanwa Bank (Japan), Standard Chartered Bank (UK), and Sumitomo Bank (Japan). Toba Pulp Lestari was formerly listed on the Jakarta Stock Exchange, Surabaya Stock Exchange and New York Stock Exchange.

IIU started to operate in 1989 with a mill capacity of 24,000 ton per year pulp and 180,000 ton per year dissolving pulp. The people of Porsea started to suffer under land expropriation, environmental degradation by the monoculture plantation of eucalyptus, air pollution that caused constant foul smell, pollution of ground water and the lake Toba, with health impacts such as skin itches, respiratory problems, stomach aches and forest destruction, loss of livelihood and military oppression. Moreover, in August 1988 the aerated lagoon of the waste broke down and spilled 1,440,000 cubic metres of wastewater into Asahan River—a river which thousands of people depended on for their life and used for their daily needs such as drinking water sources, fishing, bathing and washing. Asahan River turned blackish-brown, foamed, and became a stinking mass of foul water. People who used water from the Asahan River vomited, and suffered itching.

Erosion and landslides frequently occurred in areas surrounding TPL due to deforestation. The 51.36 hectares of land for the mill and 236,000 hectares of land for eucalyptus plantation and wood supply were expropriated from indigenous people of Batak. Over 110,000 hectares of forest concession in protected areas have been felled. During those days of expropriation, there was a military intervention to prevent interests of the IIU. For example, 10 indigenous women were detained for six months by the military because they yanked out eucalyptus trees planted on their lands by IIU.

‘My daughter, Reverend Sarma, had the opportunity to speak with me before I went to Jakarta. She was physically abused, also other villagers in detention. I am very worried because she is in the fourth month of pregnancy. I hope we can gather again for Christmas and New Year’. She said sadly. Then, Epueka’s voice rose ‘This is my promise. People from Porsea and I will fight Inti Indorayon Utama until the last drop of our blood. I hope you all support our struggle.

Contact details

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Surtini

the Indonesian people against the mining giant PT. Newmont Minahasa Raya—a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Corporation based in Denver, Colorado, USA

Newmont comes to Buyat

Surtini Paputungan is a 40-year-old cookie-and-fish-seller living in Buyat, a small village at the Buyat Bay in a remote region of Indonesia. From Jakarta the capital city of Indonesia, it needs four hours by plane and then around three hours by bus to get there. She is married and has four children. She is poor, like other villagers in her community. Her family's life depends on a small boat without motor, simple fishhooks and a net. Such tools can only be used for small distance fishing when the sea calms during October to February. The sea was used to be rich with coral fish. Buyat Bay provided coral fishes as living sources for its neighboring villages. At the peak fishing season, Surtini sells fish caught by her husband in the village market. When there were strong winds no one went fishing, and Surtini sold home backed cookies. The earnings were only enough for a simple living. Sometimes they had to borrow money from neighbors and bought food on credit at the village's small store, which would be repaid from the luck of the following catch.

Life of that poor fisher community with 53 households, around 240 persons, took a turn for the worse as a gold mining company PT. Newmont Minahasa Raya—a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Corporation based in Denver, Colorado, USA, the fifth biggest mining company of the world—got a mining licence from Indonesian government in 1994 for around 500 hectares of land. Newmont started to operate an open pit mine in 1996 and daily disposed around 2,000 tons of tailings (mining waste) directly into the Buyat Bay. It used a technology called 'Submarine Tailing Disposal' (STD), only about 82 m below sea level. Leaks of the pipe have occurred several times. Some studies by researches from the university in North Sulawesi, Agriculture Institute in Bogor and the Indonesian government environmental impact monitoring agency showed that Buyat Bay is now polluted by heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium and mercury.

The only sources of livelihood of the community are polluted and destroyed, coral reefs are damaged, and many fish have been found rotten on the beach. It is more difficult to get fish. Even when they do get it, nobody wants to buy the fish-catch because they are afraid to eat poisoned fishes. The life of Surtini and her family became more difficult because her husband could not afford a motorboat to go further from the bay to the still unpolluted fishing grounds.

Surtini stopped baking and selling cookies in 1998, as she started to suffer pain in all her joints. Her whole body became numb, with headaches, myopia, hearing disorder, and difficulty to talk. The worst was in 1999 as she became paralyzed for about three months. Her hair could not be touched because it was very painful. The village clinic could not explain what was wrong with her. The doctor provided by Newmont stated that nothing had happened to her, though a couple of weeks later a team from Newmont came to take blood-samples of Surtini and other villagers. A year later, after pressure from national and international NGOs to disclose the result of that blood examination in a laboratory in Santa Monica in USA, Newmont admitted that blood of the villagers was contaminated with arsenic, mercury and cyanide.

Surtini stopped eat fish from Buyat Bay because she realized that her health was getting worse when she consumed it. She overcame the paralysis and got better. The pain in her joints and headaches often returned, in particular after eating fish from Buyat Bay, as she had no other alternative food. In October 2001 Surtini was brought to Jakarta by NGOs to have a medical check-up and stayed for one week in hospital. Doctors could not explain her sickness. This also showed that difficult it

is to deal with illness from contamination by heavy metals. No hospital in Indonesia can deal with it. When Surtini gave birth to her fourth child in September 2002, her condition was so weak that she couldn't produce milk and she could not buy milk for the baby. Then she just gave her breasts to calm it down and gave her tea and water instead. During a meeting in June 2002, Surtini met two forensic doctors who informed her that her illness was a symptom of arsenic poisoning.

Surtini is not the only case in Buyat. 51 other villagers—80% among them women—suffered the same symptoms as Surtini: constant headaches, pain in the joints, lumps spread on the body and itchiness. A blood examination of 19 villagers by two Indonesian environmental networks (Walhi and Jatam) showed a high accumulation of arsenic and mercury in their blood.

Against the global goliath

"Tailings is the worst crime to me, my children and my community" stated Surtini in her testimony in a workshop on Women and Globalization during the People's Forum in June 2002 in Bali prior to the Preparatory Committee Meeting of the UN to World Summit on Sustainable Development. Since 1997, Surtini joined the movement in her village against Newmont. She was in the villagers' delegation to the local and provincial government and provincial parliament to submit complaints. She delivered testimonies in various meetings and conferences on mining and submarine tailing disposal.

All efforts have so far been fruitless. The provincial government of North Sulawesi and Newmont always insist that the tailings are safely piled on the sea floor, that there is no pollution, and have branded villagers as people doing subversion against foreign investment. Moreover, international NGO campaigns, including an intervention in the shareholder meeting of Newmont in Denver, USA in 1999, led to more oppression of villagers. The Indonesian government fully supports foreign investment by, among others, providing military, police and civil bureaucracy help to oppress people in safeguarding the projects. USAID has threatened environmental NGOs that it will stop its funds if they campaign against Newmont, and will not fund NGOs working against the operation of US companies in Indonesia.

Surtini and many villagers who joined the struggle suffered on the one hand through intimidation by local government, and the other hand by hatred from villagers who took the community development program provided by Newmont. The program has successfully divided the struggle.

Her answer on globalization during the workshop on woman and globalisation is illuminating: 'it is a conspiracy between multinational corporations and our government in Jakarta, in Manado, in regency up to the village. Our lives are determined by Newmont, because government serves only its operation, and does what Newmont says. This conspiracy caused suffering to us: women, children and men. We lost everything—our livelihood, food, health, bay and land. Our children have no future. And, women are the most victimized by Newmont because more women are affected by the pollution.'

This awareness encouraged Surtini to mobilize women in her village, discuss their situation, attend training for women in advocacy supported by women NGOs, and attend seminars and conferences where they delivered their testimony, telling other people their experiences. During the medical check-up in 2001 in Jakarta, Surtini visited several woman groups and asked for solidarity. She did all the testimonies while suffering severe headaches. Surtini and other women from the village plead with other villagers to reject the community development program offered by Newmont in the awareness that the struggle against the mining giant should be started in their own village by rejecting everything offered by Newmont.

Right now Surtini and villagers of the Buyat Bay are conducting an assessment to identify what they have lost economically, socially, culturally, environmentally due to the presence of Newmont, which will stop operation in North Sulawesi in 2004. She said, "They cannot just go away leaving the damage with us. They have to pay for it".

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Suwiryo is an activist working on issue of environment and human rights. He advocates the issue that environmental destruction is a human right violation.

Source:

— Verrianto Madjowa, *Kemelut tambang emas Minahasa, Rekonstruksi kasus 1986–2001*, Jakarta, 2002

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Akhmad Saukani

a look at Nike through the eyes of Doson's worker

My name is Akhmad Saukani, 35 years old, from Lampung province in Indonesia. I finished my high school there. I am currently living in Banten near Doson's factory with my wife and my two year old kid. I met my wife in Doson after I worked for six years there. My wife quit from the factory when we had a baby. I am the only breadwinner now. My last position in Doson is as a foreman in the Lasting Section.

Indonesia willingness to be one of the countries offering cheap labour and tight control over the worker's movement was responded positively by foreign investors. Since 1967 many foreign investors placed their money in the manufactured industries like sport-shoes, textile and electronic. These footloose industries only consider low cost production in a new location. They transfer to other countries without losing significant capital. Nike is one of the largest sport-shoes productions. They control 36 % of the world's market and have enjoyed Indonesia's economy policy of cheap labour and many kinds of incentives and taxes deduction.

I started working in Doson Company on 11 May 1993. Some months later, Nike became partner with Doson. My first salary was 3.100 rupiah per day and my last salary—in 31 September 2002—is 756.000 per month (\$86.89, 1\$=Rp.8700). When Nike partnered with Doson, Doson still produced other sport shoes such as REEBOK and ASSIC. Later, Nike said that Doson should only produce Nike and nothing else. There are two shifts in the factory. The first shift started from 07.30 until 15.30 with a one-hour break. The overtime started from 15.30 until 19.00. the second shift is from 19.00 to 03.00 with a ninety minute break. Overtime was from 03.00 am to 06.00 am. Sometimes, the company did not pay the worker's thirty minutes overtime after working hours. Women workers did not get their due leave or compensation with money. We faced verbal abuse and harassment during working hours also. Nike's inspectors do these when they visited the factory.

For many years in Indonesia, Nike benefited from the country's condition of regional minimum wage paid to their workers. In 1992, Nike's workers began their movement to demand fair payment and better condition for their life. Though there were many strikes and appeals, Nike was firm on its position. When the pressure came from workers and NGOs at the national and international level, Nike started to improve their relation with workers. However, the improvements that they made did not relate to working conditions or worker's rights. They only opened formal schools equal to secondary and high school in several of their subcontractor's factories. This program did not improve the average worker's condition or wages. With increasing worker's awareness of their rights, Nike threatened to reduce their production in Indonesia in 1997. In 1997, several Nike's subcontractors lost their orders. This was was a signal that Nike would move its company to other places where the workers have less awareness. Thies peaked in closing Doson's company in September 2002. The official announcement of Nike stated that it is merely a business decision and did not relate to any Indonesian government policy nor worker problems nor misunderstanding with their partners in Indonesia.

Nike simply said that they were not responsible for the 6,867 laid off workers because there was no any written agreement with this company. This was a bitter pill for the workers. It is rather a ironic claim for a company who could pay a hundred million dollars to basketball player Michael Jordan for endorsements, and then claim that they neglected to make a written business contract of millions dollars.

Nike gained a lot of profit and control in the world's market when workers accepted low wages and were not aware of their rights. Until 1994, 40% of Nike's production came from Indonesia. This reduced to 30% in 2000.

My colleagues in the trade union and I have tried our best to negotiate with Nike's Country Manager Jeff Dumont. We requested him that they should not end their order with Doson but he told me that it was already final word from NIKE. The 6,081 workers of Doson including myself have become the victims. We have not received any compensation until today. The present situation in Indonesia, where unemployment is very high, makes our life more miserable.

I think this is a kind of global capital arrogance reflected in the company like Nike, who can easily end their contract without considering workers sacrifice. Until today, Nike only has its trademark. I never heard of Nike investing its capital in Doson. So it is easy for them to leave Doson. Indonesia's regulations cannot be enforced in this case. The practice of Nike's Code of Conduct is merely a slogan that pasted in the wall. One of the points stated in the Code is 'respect the worker's right to organize, negotiate etc.' That is only lip service. We as trade union activists cannot assert this right. When we have a difficulty in negotiating our rights, Nike said that it is a responsibility of the company.

Indonesia Businessman Association's (Apindo) Tangerang branch chairman Herry Rumawatin told The Jakarta Post that so far this year Nike had reduced its orders from its Indonesian subcontractors by some 40 percent. 'We expect the order reduction will go as high as 50 percent later this year, causing thousands more workers to be laid off in Tangerang,' he said, adding that there are seven subcontractors, with more than 20,000 workers, of Nike still in operation in the regency.

Nike relocates or moves their order to other countries where the labor cost is lower. Urban Community Mission recorded that until 2002 there were 57,500 workers at the Nike subcontractors spread in 11 companies. Doson's experience indicates a possibility that other companies will face the same situation.

I urge the following parties to respect our struggle and rights:

- ♦ The Indonesia government should enforce regulations and the policies they make. Punish those who fail to follow the law;
- ♦ All workers, specially in Indonesia and workers in Asia in general, should to work hand in hand and build a solidarity against exploited practice of transnational corporation
- ♦ I call upon all workers to give moral and material support for our current struggle for I think the failure and victory of this struggle will belong to all workers wherever they are.
- ♦ In the future after I finish my case with Nike, I will help other workers with all the ability that I have.
- ♦ I urge workers who are working now in factories that have a Code of Conduct to be critical of what is written and implemented in it.

The other lessons are that Nike did not want to be not be responsible by avoiding an written agreement with their partners. It showed their strength and arrogance of global capital. The effect of globalization has been proven to exploit people in the poor country and easily moving their capital to other cheap labour countries once the respective country did not benefit their business anymore. Thus, this reality teaches all workers from all over the world to be united to end the unjust world.

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Kodaikanal

Hindustan Lever and mercury contamination

In 1983, a second-hand mercury thermometer factory owned by Chesebrough Ponds, a Unilever subsidiary, was imported from the US and located in the tourist and school town of Kodaikanal. The factory is situated at an altitude of 2000 meters amidst a flourishing tropical forest of the Western Ghats, one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world. To the east of the factory wall, the land slopes steeply to the Pambar Shola forest, a largely undisturbed tropical montane forest, which was recently designated as a sanctuary by the Tamilnadu Government. To the West and North, lie Kodai Lake and town.

The thermometer factory changed hands in 1997, when Hindustan Lever acquired the factory from Ponds India Ltd. Hindustan Lever is a 51% subsidiary of Anglo-Dutch multinational UniLever. Mercury for the thermometer is imported, primarily from the United States, and finished thermometers are exported to the United States, from where they are distributed to markets in Germany, UK, Australia, Spain and Canada. About 165 million pieces of thermometers have been exported between 1984 and 2001.

On 7 March 2001, Greenpeace and a local environment group—Palani Hills Conservation Council (PHCC) exposed mercury bearing waste glass dumped by the company at a local scrap yard. Demonstrations by local people at the factory site forced its closure, and the Pollution Control Board issued a notice to the company to refrain from carrying out any activity at the plant site. The TNPCB formed a Hazardous Waste Monitoring Committee (HWMC) to look into the contamination caused by the thermometer factory, and Greenpeace and PHCC were appointed on the committee as representatives of the community.

Global values, local standards?

In May 2001 HLL presented a report as an impact statement drawn up by consultants Dames and Moore (USA) to the HWMC. The Report was accompanied by results of sampling for mercury around the factory site as required by the TNPCB, and an assessment of the impact on health of workers and the environment over the past 18 years.

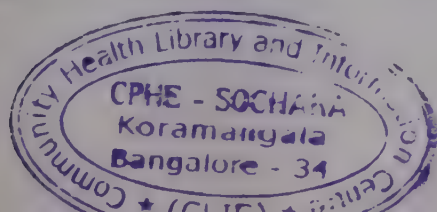
HLL and the Report profess a commitment to transparency and the same concern for health and environment 'no matter where in the world they operate,' and the reputation of the consultants was intended to lend further credibility to the conclusions arrived at.

The Report concluded that there was 'slight' contamination across the 22 acre factory site and excavation of some contaminated soil (over 10 mg/kg mercury as per Dutch standards) needed to be excavated. The Report found no significant contamination to the wider environment or on the health of a single worker. The Report arrived at a mercury balance which showed that over 18 years the plant had emitted about 550 kg of mercury to the environment.

Tests carried out by Greenpeace had in fact shown that even at the periphery of the premises leading into Pambar shola, the contamination which the company had reported as slight or negligible was 600 to 800 times permissible limits. In October 2002, the community invited the Indian People's Tribunal to hold an inquiry into the matter, and the following facts have been established following the Report to the HWMC and the IPT hearings.

The patterns of deceit

The Report to the HWMC and subsequently the IPT presented no documents to substantiate the company's claims. For instance, records of mercury imported, used, or stored in waste which are statutorily required declarations to be submitted to authorities periodically through the life of the plant, were not included, only the assertion that consultants of repute had referred to such documents and drawn their conclusions. The Report on the impact to workers health relied on records said to exist with the company, along with the finding of the Inspector of Factories carried out annually. It



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also relied on readings of mercury in blood and urine taken a month or more after closure of the plant. In other words the strategy of the company was to hide behind the weight of its thick Report and the assurance of well paid consultants to meet its obligation of transparency.

The community and Greenpeace steadfastly insisted on examination of records and called on the TNPCB and the company to reveal the documentation lying with the company. At the insistence of the PCB, between May 2001 and September 2002, documentation was extracted from the company which established a series of lies and contradictions in the report. The information clearly showed that the Hindustan Lever had lied

- ◆ In making a false declaration to the Board by attempting to hide 10 tons more mercury than it had previously admitted to using.
- ◆ About the quantum of waste in its possession and the content of mercury in the same.
- ◆ About the quantity of waste it had illegally sold offsite as broken glass, thus having spread through Tamilnadu and Karnataka not 400 kg of mercury, but over 4.50 tons.
- ◆ About the amount of mercury it had recycled.
- ◆ About the mercury emission at the factory, and had after the closure order illegally dug out the foundation of the factory floor and removed vast quantities of mercury which had seeped in over the years.
- ◆ About workers health records, and safety measures at the factory and the nature of its documentation of the same.

The evidence recorded before the IPT by way of documented testimony from the former workers revealed that almost all workers displayed symptoms known to be caused by mercury contamination, and the records show that 10 young workers (average age 31 years) had died after employment at the factory of symptoms attributable to mercury poisoning. Under the Indian Factory Act, the factory is responsible for such injury unless it can establish that the symptoms can be attributed to some other cause.

Thus, Hindustan Lever Limited are responsible for having caused substantial injury to its employees and the deaths of at least ten young men during the 18 years of operation of its thermometer plant in Kodaikanal. They are also, along with their consultants, responsible for falsifying information, tampering with evidence and lying to a statutory body, offences which attract a criminal liability against the company and its consultants.

Corporate Liability, workers rights and the law

This case demonstrates the double standards followed by corporations in paying lip service to environmental and human rights, without respecting the right of communities to records and information necessary for the discovery of factors affecting health and environment.

It also demonstrates the failure of regulatory bodies in monitoring toxic emissions from units or their impact on the workers or the environment. It points to the inadequacy of regulatory bodies in terms of their technical capabilities for detecting and regulating toxic emissions from factories. It points to a need for strengthening the right to public information on the functioning of industries emitting toxics during the process of production.

Above all it calls for a regime of compensation to affected communities, which in the industrialized countries was the prime deterrent to the emission of toxics from the production processes, a factor which in this country is still managed by corrupt bureaucracies and acquiescent governments who protect investment even at the cost of human life and environmental security of the country.

Submitted by
Navroz Mody
For Greenpeace

Mela

a former forced migrant worker in Palestine

Mella Windasari is the third daughter of five children of a poor family in Indramayu, a small town around five hours by car from Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Her father earned money as bicycle taxi driver. Her mother sold food in a small food stall. She lived in a poor part of that small town, where people worked as land workers, small traders, and many of them as bicycle taxi drivers. Many of her neighbors worked abroad, mainly in Arab countries. Mella dreamt of working abroad, bringing money home, building a good house for her family and having a better life.

When Mella was 14, in the second class of the secondary school, someone from a recruitment agency offered her work in Kuwait, promising a big amount of money. Poverty and a dream to improve the life of her family made her take up the offer. The family helped her pay the high fees to the recruitment agency by borrowing money from their neighbours.

Mella and three other girls from the village were brought to Jakarta. There they were placed in a 'training center' of the agency. It had poor facilities. They slept on a thin mattress in a big room with 60 other women, while waiting for their departure to the dreamland.

On the evening of 1 March 2000, after five months of waiting, Mella and 12 other women were told to go to the airport. The plane brought them to Palestine instead of Kuwait as promised, without any companion from the agency. As she arrived at the family in Palestine, she realized that she was employed as domestic worker and not as industrial worker as promised. She could not refuse because she could not speak Arabic or English.

During her less than three-month stay in Palestine, Mella's employer changed four times. At the first employer, Mella worked from early in the morning to late night. She suffered stomachaches since the weather was too cold for her. She worked only 7 days there. Then Mr. Iyad of the agency picked her up and brought her to a new employer. Mr. Iyad beat her, and her first 7 days work was not paid. At the house of second employer, she took care of seven adults. She asked to be sent back to Indonesia because of the stomachaches and the cold weather. After five days Mr. Iyad came to take her. She was beaten again, this time with a wooden stick on her back and knees till the stick broke. Two colleagues of Mr. Iyad witnessed this. At the third employer's house, Mella could not work because she was ill due to the beating. She worked for five days without payment and was brought back to the agency.

At the agency, Mr. Iyad threatened to kill her if she did not work. She was then brought to the fourth employer. Every day she was a target of beatings, slaps and kicks by the wife. After seven days, she could not stand the torture anymore. Early one morning she jumped from the window of the third floor. Her legs, spine and hip were broken. An unknown person helped and brought her to the hospital where she stayed for about two months. After changing hospitals, finally she was sent back to Indonesia. After three months in Palestine, Mella arrived in Jakarta on 20 May 2000, paralysed for the rest of her life. No one was prosecuted in Palestine or in Indonesia for the abuse she suffered.

Mella is one of many young women who dream of a better life, but are trafficked by recruitment agencies, work as slaves without any protection in a land where they don't know the language and culture, are abused, and come back home wrecked.

Mella represents the complexity of the migrant worker's issues in Indonesia. Since the 1970s, the export of labour has been important means for the governments of developing countries to get

foreign exchange. For the people, it is an alternative to overcome increasing poverty, particularly during the ongoing economic crisis in Indonesia, and the loss of livelihood due to the green revolution and expropriation of land for industrial complexes. For the recruitment agency, the labour trade is a lucrative business.

Massive export of labour from Indonesia started in the early 1980s. During 1989–1999, around 1.7 million workers left Indonesia, 67.5% of them women. The official record does not reflect reality because many more migrant workers went abroad without legal procedures and are undocumented. In 2000 alone, 435,219 workers, 67% of them women, left for three main destination countries: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and South Korea. They earned around US\$ 2.3 billion. The women were mainly from villages and poor urban areas. No detailed record of the women was collected, but from the cases handled, they seem to mainly have secondary school education.

During 2000, Solidaritas Perempuan (SP), a Jakarta based woman's non-government organization worked on 119 complaints from 1,118 migrant workers, 63% of them women. From the 194 cases handled by SP, 4.% were raped (pregnant and birth of babies), 13.4% tortured, 1% disabled due to torture, 29.38% unpaid for their work, and 4.26% were sold to other employers.

Cases of abuse of migrant workers were reported to the government. However, there is still no significant change in its policy to protect Indonesia's migrant workers, in Indonesia as well as in the receiving countries. As long as mobility of labour is not accepted as a right for workers but as a trade commodity, the abuse of migrant workers will continue. Mella now stays in a house for disabled persons. 'It was a very painful experience. I hope that other women will not encounter the same experience as mine,' she says.

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Romualdo Noble

the Sugar Plantation Workers in Negros Occidental, Philippines

The sugar plantation workers in Negros Occidental, Philippines are historically vulnerable to the annual seasonal joblessness in the hacienda (sugar plantations). As sugarcane begins to mature from the months of April until harvest starting in September, jobs in the plantation become scarce. In the past few years, however, scarcity became more severe. This phenomenon can be attributed to two main factors: (1) the primitive hacienda-system cannot absorb for employment the increasing population in the hacienda and (2) the cost reduction designs of the landowners to compete with cheap foreign sugar flooding the country because of globalisation. These designs include rotating workers who were made to work 3 to 4 days a week and 'pakyaw' (piece rate) scheme that employs the labour of entire families including children.

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines [by enacting trade-related laws/policies (Republic Act 8187, National Tariff Act, CEPT)], the IMF and the World Trade Organization are the main perpetrators of this violation. The adverse effect of the Government's adoption of the imposition of WTO is that local traders prefer to buy or smuggle imported sugar rather than buying from domestic sources. This compels the hacienderos (sugar plantation owners) to cut down on cost, especially of labour, by reducing the number of regular workers and using the pakyaw scheme or rotation of workers.

Republic Act 8187 lowered the tariff rates on imported sugar from 133% to 50% for in-quota importations. The Maximum Access Volume (MAV) was set at 60,000 metric tones per year, approximately 4% of the annual domestic sugar production. But in 1998, the country imported 350,000 MT of refined sugar, way above the MAV for the year. The figure does not include smuggled sugar.

Due to the comparatively low and subsidized cost of imported sugar (\$0.06—\$0.10/lb) vis-à-vis local production cost (\$0.16—0.21/lb), the price of imported sugar is 56.25% lower than domestic sugar. The country's sugar production with its inefficiency and high cost has lost its viability and may not survive the world market prices when the 0% tariff is adopted in 10 years.

With the low price in the world market, sugar trading has now become a more profitable business venture than direct production. In 1995, all sugar mills in Negros retrenched employees and the process of 'right-sizing' to be more 'competitive' is still going on. Four sugar mills have already declared bankruptcy.

In the words of former President Joseph Estrada, the sugar industry is a 'sunset industry.' The WTO Agreement on Agriculture, when it will be implemented will deal the deathblow to the deteriorating industry.

The impact of globalisation

The eventual ratification of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) in 1994, finalized the process towards the complete lifting of trade barriers between countries. It increasingly opened up the floodgates of 'free trade' and junked the old-fashioned 'protectionism' as outdated. Without hesitation, the country joined the WTO bandwagon and unilaterally adopted trade liberalization measures way ahead of schedule in 2004 and of its neighbours in Southeast Asia.

The GATT—WTO Agreement of Agriculture (AoA) ruled on the elimination of quantitative restrictions (QR) on agricultural products and replaced them with tariff equivalents. Obediently the

Philippines enacted the Agricultural Tariff Act (RA 8178) in 1996 that abolished all QRs on 'sensitive' agricultural products such as: corn and substitutes, coffee, garlic, potatoes, onions, cabbage, poultry and livestock. Cheap imported agricultural product inundated the country to the disadvantage of the Filipino farmers.

The government continues to deny that there is hunger in the sugar plantations. It has so far provided around 500 sacks of rice distributed to those who participated in the hunger campaign. A meaningless response considering that there are about 7,000 protesters asking for food. An average worker-household needs about 6 kilograms of rice a day. The amount of rice given could only feed 4,166 families in a day. Lean months last from four to six months.

There are 330,000 sugar worker households in the province alone and more than 550,000 nationwide, 80 to 90% of whom are affected by the annual food shortage. Promises were made to address related problems such as malnutrition and child labour. To date, there is no objective proof that these promises have taken place.

People's response

In April 2002, about 7,000 workers camped out in front of the Provincial Administration Centre in Bacolod City to meet with Governor Joseph Maranon asking for food, medicine and livelihood assistance. Snubbed by the governor, who refused to meet them and attended a festival instead, starving protesters forced open the National Food Authority (NFA) warehouse.

Larry Datong was among those who took part in the hunger protest. He said hunger started in their Hacienda Igpanulong as early as February of 2002 when the landowner stopped cultivation because of the long dry spell. To make both ends meet, Larry along with other workers in their hacienda moved from farm to farm to look for jobs. On certain occasion, he would come to the pier in the provincial capital to load and unload cargo earning 30 pesos (roughly about .60 US cents) for a days work.

Hunger peaked in April and, along with workers in nearby hacienda,s they held a dialogue with the baranggay (village) government to ask for food support. Claiming they did not have enough funds for food, the village head referred them to the municipal government who in turn provided them with vehicles and passed them on to the Provincial Governor's office.

'It was not meant to be a protest action but a dialogue,' Larry said. 'We just got frustrated when the governor refused to talk to us.' He insisted that they were supposed to dialogue in the afternoon of 29 April but the governor did not show up until the following day. 'Some people were not able to eat dinner and breakfast. We even appealed to the Bishop [Bishop Vicente Navarra]... and the public through the radio and asked for food.' Contributions however were not enough. Before noon, about 500 protesters marched to the NFA warehouse and demanded rice. The manager was out, they were told. At the heat of the negotiations, Larry with nine others was ushered inside the building purportedly to dialogue with representatives of NFA. They were made to sign their names in what Larry described as a 'notebook.'

Unknown to them, protesters outside had already made their move. They forced open the warehouse and got 10 sacks of rice and then went back to the main group and cooked the rice. The protest eventually ended at six in the evening after an assurance that the Governor will dialogue with them the following day. A week after the incident, Larry and the rest of the people who dialogued with NFA received summons for 'robbery.' It was only then that Larry realized that the 'notebook' they signed was used as evidence against them. Unfazed by the charges, Larry told national TV that he was willing to go to prison if his family would be jailed with him. At least they will be 'given ration inside the jail,' he added. 'We don't want to beg. We don't want our children to say that we were able to feed them by begging. All that we asked from the government is they give us land to till or give proper employment.'

Larry's child died at birth during the peak of hunger two years earlier. The child is just one of the countless children victims who died due to malnutrition in Negros.

At the moment, there is no apparent improvement in the condition of sugar plantation workers. No plan is being implemented to avert the occurrence of hunger at the onset of the lean months in the plantations.

The key issues raised by the workers are:

1. Hunger and scarcity during lean months.
2. Severe malnourishment, under nourishment (20,662 based on 2002 report of the Provincial Health Office) and infant mortality.
3. Extensive utilization of child labour in the plantations.
4. Violation of basic labour right to security of tenure.
5. Underpayment of plantation workers wages at P50—90/day (\$.96—\$1.76) as against the Department of Labour and Employment mandated daily minimum wage of P150 (\$2.88)

Sugar workers involved in the campaign believe the following actions should be implemented to stave off hunger:

1. Speed up the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program of the government to democratise control of resources for agricultural production;
2. Allocation of funds to programs supportive of agrarian reform farmers such as the provision of production capital, infrastructure, technology and market access;
3. Allocation of funds for livelihood generation that will address the problem of job scarcity during the lean months in the sugar plantation;
4. Advocate against the signing of the proposed WTO Agreement on Agriculture as a way of protecting agriculture workers.

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines by enacting trade-related laws/policies (Republic Act 8187, National Tariff Act, CEPT), in collaboration with the IMF and the World Trade Organization are the main perpetrators of this violation.

The PSWC—led Freedom from Hunger Campaign will sustain the campaign against hunger in the coming years. It will push for the speedy implementation of agrarian reform in the sugar plantations. PSWC believes, Agrarian reform implementation, along with the provision of sufficient resources needed for production, is the long-term remedy to the perennial hunger among sugar workers and the most effective safety net against the flooding of imported agricultural products from abroad. Actions will take the form of street protest, public information that will incessantly hammer down the issue at the national and international policy-making level.

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Pon. Sundaresan

corporatisation of common land and the Campaign for Right to Livelihood and Food Security, Tamilnadu, India

I am Pon.Sundaresan aged 57. I am an elected representative of Perungudi Panchayat of Thirumayam Taluk in Pudukottai District, Tamilnadu, India. I have been the vice-president of the Panchayat for two consecutive terms from 1996—2001 and 2001—2006. I am also the president of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) for the last eleven years. Besides being active in the Tamilnadu Vivasaigal Sangam (Tamilnadu Farmers Movement), I am an active member of the Campaign for Right to Livelihood and Food Security—Tamilnadu.

I am here to present the plight of a group of landless Dalit farm families who are threatened with eviction from a 100 acre village common land which has been their livelihood base for many generations. This is being caused by the policy and a programme of government of Tamilnadu wherein 2 million hectares of rain-fed land is to be given on 30-year lease to corporations.

Before presenting my case I would like to state and bring to the attention of the forum that the process of liberalization, privatisation and globalisation have been depriving the already marginalised sections of the rural communities of their access, right and control over land, water, vegetation and common property resources.

One glaring example is the large-scale entry of corporate plantation companies who, in the name of greening the barren, fenced off hundreds of acres of rain-fed land where a variety of grains, cereals, pulses, minor millets and oil seeds were raised. Most of the acquired lands were smallholdings of less than five acres that belonged to resource-poor rain-fed farmers. In some villages, landowners transferred several hundred acres of land all at once to these corporates.

The most prominent companies were Anubav, Maxworth orchards, Sterling Tree Magnum, VGP and Kalaimahal Sabha. These companies worked mainly through land brokers who were about to convince villages to sell off their land. One tactic commonly used was to tell individual families that everyone else around them have sold their lands, so they might as well sell theirs too because they would anyway be cut off from it. The other common features in all land purchases is that, besides the acquired land, the companies fenced off common property resources such as odais (streams), kanmais (tanks), porambokes (common land) grazing land, pathways connecting villages and even temple lands.

When the individual landowners, both big and small and the companies were busy with transactions, the shepherds, the landless, the Dalits and women remained mute spectators, being unable to resist the onslaught.

Once the land was acquired, the companies went ahead with wire fencing, installing giant borewells fitted with high capital intensive water lifting devices and establishing monoculture plantations of teak, cashew, acacia mangium, mango orchards, etc. For reasons unknown, the companies started collapsing faster than the speed they came. Most companies have now vanished from the scene leaving the land to vagaries of monsoon.

Corporatising crop land in Tamilnadu

Unmindful of the dubious dealings of the corporations, the Government of Tamilnadu has come out with a policy and a programme to lease land to these corporations.

The Government of Tamilnadu, in its order Ms.No.131, Agriculture (WLD Cell) Department, dated 23.05.2002, declares their intention to develop 2 million hectares of wasteland that includes 300,000 hectares of common land with forward linkages to agribusiness, storage and markets.

Under the programme, blocks of land currently lying fallow and waste would be brought under high value cash crops including cotton, fruits, vegetables, flowers, medical plants and herbs, aromatic

plants, spices and condiments and plantation crops including cashew, commercial crops like silk cotton and oil seeds including paradise tree and jatropa etc.

Land to be given on lease would be 1000 acres per applicant and in exceptional cases this may be considered for relaxation. The maximum period for lease of land will be 30 years. In its hurry to see the scheme implemented, the entire work force in the revenue department was geared towards locating suitable sites. District wise details of land available for distribution were displayed at the office of the District Collectors.

More than 1500 applications have already been received from the corporates spread all over the country. In the recently concluded conference of District Collectors, the Chief Minister announced that the programme is to be launched on the Tamil New Year Day—14 January 2003

The onslaught of corporations on the marginalised in Pudukottai District

As part of the drive to locate contiguous patches of land, the Pudukottai District Administration is said to have identified an area of 8,700 hectares, spread over 680 locations. One such location is a compact area of 100 acres of common land in Perungudi and Poovampatti villages in Thirumayam Taluk of the district. What is happening in these villages is prelude to what is in store for hundreds of villages in Tamilnadu.

Perungudi and Poovampatti villages have a population of 5200 people among whom 2500 are Dalits. There are more than 2500 cattle that include goats, sheep, cows and bullocks. The village is surrounded by about 2000 acres of crop land of which 1400 acres are rain fed. The villages have in common about 150 acres of unassessed poramboke land of which more than 40 landless families have already occupied 100 acres, majority of them Dalits.

The geo-physical location of this 150 acre common land plays a vital role in maintaining the socio-economic and agro-ecological balance of the village. It is the only source for grazing cattle. The two Kanmais (tanks) namely Nelli Kanmai and Kolikondan Kanmai are the main water sources. There is a "Vari" (Water way) that links the two kanmais. The shrubs and trees scattered all over and the presopis juliflora (seemai karuvel) are the source of fuel for cooking. The forty families have been raising a variety of grains, cereal, pulses, minor millets and oil seeds for the last four decades.

This land has been declared 'waste' and proposed to be taken and leased out to corporations.

On 22 December 2002, the Revenue Thasildar, with a group of his subordinates, entered the village and started a survey of the land in question. The people resisted. Seeing the fury and anger of the people the Thasildar retreated. The next day he came with the District Revenue Officer. The people resist again. He too retreats with a severe warning that he will initiate legal action against all encroachers.

A fact-finding team representing the Campaign for Right to Livelihood and Food Security visited the villages. People have gained confidence with this show of solidarity and help. Now they have prepared themselves to counter the onslaught.

Our struggle continues.

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Sundardei

increasing poverty in India

Manhira is a village about 20 kilometres from the district headquarters at Bolangir, Orissa in Eastern India. A look around through the dusty road leading to the village does not give an impression of poverty, until one reaches a low, tile-roofed and one-roomed Indira Awas Yojana house inside a corner of the village.

Sixty-five year old tribal widow Sundardei Kohinda lives here with her widowed daughter Kausalya Majhi, aged about 30 years. They have no house and land of their own. The house belongs to one of Sundardei's sons and her two sons cultivate the one-acre ancestral land from which hardly two months food comes for families of both the sons. They give her some grains (one mana, about 17 kg) of that. Both mother and daughter survive mainly on daily wage.

Sundardei was very young when she married Sabara—a marginal tribal farmer and a daily wage earner. They earned 3-4 months' food by cultivating their one-acre maal land (middle land) that was in Sabara's father's name. Working as daily wage labourers for the rest of the year, they fed themselves and their four children—two daughters and two sons. 'In the village, daily wage used to be 2 ada of paddy (one ada is about 850 grams) for one session then. If we were employed for the entire day, we were given four adas of paddy", said Sundardei and went on to add thoughtfully 'wages today are three adas.' (Minimum wage in Orissa is Rs.50; three ada of paddy would be about Rs. 15).

As time passed by and children grew up, food for the entire family became a concern. All the children were then pressed in to daily wage employment. Kausalya—the widowed daughter staying with Sundardei—was only about 12 years old when Sabara died. While other siblings had been married, Kausalya's marriage fell on Sundardei's 'weak' shoulders.

When she was about 18 years old, Kausalya was given in marriage to Bhibi Majhi of Budhipadar village under Loisingha block. Bhibi was all alone. Sundardei could give her daughter only a couple of utensils in marriage. Bhibi was a daily wage earner. But after Kausalya gave birth to a boy, Bhibi had to search for additional income source and hence had to seasonally migrate to the irrigation belt of Bargarh to work as agricultural wage labour. They stayed in a hut built in the outskirts of a village called Bargaon. While Bhibi used to go out to work, Kausalya stayed back home to take care of the child.

When agricultural wage would be hard to come by, Bhibi would employ himself in construction works. On one such day Bhibi went in to the village to work in a house construction. While carrying big stones for the wall, one stone fell on his feet injuring it severely. The wound did not heal completely even after a month. As Bhibi could not work, the family began to starve. They decided to come down to Manhira where Sunderdei took all the pain in meeting the expenses of two injections required for the wound to heal. The wound finally began to heal.

In the meantime, came the most important festival in not only Bolangir but also entire western Orissa—Nuakhai (new rice eating festival). People of western Orissa, however far they may be, go home during this time to celebrate the occasion.

Bhibi did the same. Even though her mother-in-law wanted them to stay back, Bhibi insisted on the need to be in his native village for the occasion. One night there was heavy rain and Bhibi's hut was flooded with water. Bhibi started shivering as his feet remained inside water for some hours.

He asked for a blanket, which was not there. Before Kausalya could think anything in a bewildered state, Bhibi died of pneumonia.

This bad news reached Sundardei the very next morning. She went to Budhipadar and brought back her shaken and broken daughter along with her son. It required both Kausalya and Sundardei lot of courage to come out of that grief and get on with life, at least for the future of son, Sukru. But it was not going to be easy for Sundardei. They had neither land nor any other asset. Whatever support she got from her sons was meagre. Both mother and daughter had to take to daily wage and agricultural wage labour for survival.

Meanwhile Sukru grew up and went to school in Manhira. Both Kausalya and Sundardei wanted Sukru to get a better life and so worked hard to give him education. Destiny, though, had something else in store. In mid-2002, Sukru fell ill with jaundice followed by fever. Within a short time, he fell ill again—this time with diarrhoea. It continued for couple of days. Neither Kausalya nor Sundardei took it seriously as the boy was going to school and was playing around. In early hours of third day, Sukru had several bouts of diarrhoea and succumbed to it. Both mother and grandmother were left stupefied. For Kausalya, the shock was unbearable. It was the end of the world for her. Kausalya has not been able to come out the shock yet. She is still mentally disturbed.

Suddenly both mother and daughter became highly vulnerable; more so is Sundardei. Kausalya could no more work. All the burden of earning for food has fallen on Sundardei. Her old age does not permit her to do heavy and long hours of work. But there is no alternative. Both of them would die if she stops working. Even then work is not available all the time. Wage labour is very difficult to get at this time of the year.

Sundardei does not have a BPL card [Below poverty level card that entitles her to rations at subsidised cost]. The only security is her meagre old age pension of Rs. 100 with help of which they manage about 12-14 days in a month. The rest are spent either in hunger or by managing wage employment. Many times, they have 'food' (only rice) only for that day, not knowing where the next day's food will come from. The house that she lives in belongs to her son who got it under the Indira Awas Scheme. The son stays with his family, in another house belonging to his cousin.

Sundardei says in a choked voice 'there is no one for my daughter; everything will be over the day I die. When my husband was alive and we had some land, people were giving credit. Now they ask what income I have and refuse. God only knows how long can I go on like this.'

As told to Alok Rath (ActionAid India)

Samuhik Marudi Pratikar Udyam team in Bolangir, Orissa, India.

Kolleru Dalits

about Kolleru Lake

Kolleru lake is between Krishna and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh, in south India. Its 348 sq. miles are spread across two mandals in Krishna district and seven mandals in West Godavari district. 70 % of the labour depends on agriculture and allied activities. The most of the agriculture is dependent on canal irrigation. West Godavari district is known as the 'Granary of Andhra Pradesh' due to the high yield of paddy. The lake's catchment area is 3,403 sq. kms and the delta is 1,360 sq. kms. Around 1,10,000 cu secs. of water flows into Kolleru through Budameru, Tammileru and Ramileru rivers and can irrigate around 13,500 hectares. It discharges about 15,000 cusecs of water through Upputeru.

There are 46 villages in the lake area and 76 villages around the lake. The total population is around 200,000 of which 40,000 are fishermen. Birds like Pelicans and waterfowls take shelter in the lake. The government declared Kolleru as a protected area in 1963 and as a bird sanctuary in 1973.

Onset of globalisation

The aqua-culture which was introduced in the Andhra coast in the early 1980s picked up momentum. In 10 years it changed the entire 1,000 kms of coastal zone. The commercial aqua culture on large scale between 1990-95 has brought unprecedented financial gains to some sections. Top Indian industrial giants like Hindustan Lever, Tata, Birla, Coramandel, and Nagarjuna jumped into the fray. These industrial giants acquired large tracts of land by using their money power and political influence. About 1,50,000 acres of land was converted into aqua-farms in this process of mass growth of aquaculture.

This has changed the land use pattern and the livelihoods of the poor and marginalised whose lives depended on the land and agriculture for generations. The most affected were the landless labour and small / marginal farmers who did not had the capacity to invest heavily to gain from the aquaculture.

Government's agenda – 'Blue Revolution'

The government's policy document Andhra Pradesh : VISION 2020 Overview states that The state (Andhra Pradesh) will undertake the following initiatives to achieve the vision :

- ◆ Develop the fisheries value and boost exports.
- ◆ Create and promote investment in infrastructure to support the development of fisheries.
- ◆ Ensure the setting up of institutions to build skills.
- ◆ Ensure sustainable development
- ◆ Promote the welfare of the state's fishing community through investments in housing, education and health.

To achieve this agenda, state has proposed to invest development of technologies like artificial reefs, fish aggregating devices, diversified fishing into gill netting, encouraging into voyage fishing by deep sea trawlers and providing suitable technologies for collecting "trash" fish from these vessels. State will actively pursue the setting up of Brackish Water User's Associations that can invest in and take control of water bodies, like drainage systems, power and road connections, charging users appropriately.

Globalisation impact on Kolleru lake

Till 1990s both prawn-culture and fish-culture were done traditionally and intended for domestic markets. Once globalisation and privatisation started, the market expanded to other countries. This changed the stakes, nature, intensity of investment and market practices drastically. Once the production and markets went through drastic changes, the land, labour, credit and other allied market segments also went through changes. The major changes are:

- ❑ 69,000 hectares of agriculture land was converted to aqua-farms.
- ❑ Irrigation canals and drain canals were converted into aqua-farms.
- ❑ Centuries old traditional practices in aquaculture have gone through severe changes.
- ❑ The number of work days in agriculture decreased.
- ❑ Labour demand decreased.
- ❑ Demand for credit increased.
- ❑ Demand for land increased.
- ❑ Intense aquaculture has degraded the land and water.
- ❑ Aquaculture collapsed by mid 1990s because of non-eco friendly practices.
- ❑ Local socio-economic conditions changed drastically.

Impact on Dalits

Dalits basically depend on land and agriculture for livelihood. They are the first and the most affected in the globalisation of aquaculture. Like in any other part of India, Dalits here also are either landless labour or small farmers who hardly own an acre of land. Besides, Dalits have been cultivating leased lands for ages. Once the demand for land shot up due to aquaculture, the lease cost increased tremendously which Dalits were not in a position to afford. Dalits who have been cultivating leased lands lost their livelihood. As aquaculture doesn't need labour like agriculture, most of the Dalit agriculture landless labours were hit.

About 16,000 hectares of agricultural land was converted into aqua-farms so also irrigation channels and drainage canals. As a result, both land and water became saline. Agricultural yields in the whole area was affected. Though Dalits were not in the fray of aquaculture, their lands, which were in the midst of the area, were affected. Salinity in Dalit lands increased and became unsuitable for agriculture. Dalit small farmers were forced to take up aquaculture. Most of them were not able to take up aquaculture, as they could not afford high investment. The case of Dalits who ventured into aquaculture is not good. All of them have ended up with heavy debts. There are cases where Dalit small farmers were forced to lease out their lands to dominant caste people under duress. The state that is the harbinger of privatisation showed its efficiency in protecting the interests of the rich.

Indukuri Krishnam Raju alias Gurramraju of Ganapavaram (W. Godavari) promised 250 Dalit families of Lingampadu village that he would develop their lands as aqua-farms and took the land on 99 years lease. 691 acres of Dalit lands were converted into fishponds in June 2002. When the Dalits asked the middlemen who handled the lease, they were taken to Krishnam Raju. He told them that he had purchased their lands and showed a Rs.100 stamp paper with signatures of 11 Dalit leaders who mediated the lease negotiations.

The Dalits approached the local police who expressed their inability to protect Dalits. The matter was reported to the District Collector at Eluru and the Dalits sat in front of the collectorate and

started relay hunger strike on 9 September 2002. The RDO visited the village on 12 September and submitted a report. During this time, the collector was transferred and a new collector, Mr. Sanjay Jaju took charge. He directed the DFO to enquire into the matter within 15 days and recover the land from disputing Dalits which is part of the protected wild sanctuary. The collector's orders doesn't refer the name of Krishnam Raju who converted the 691 acres of agriculture land into aqua-farms or the Dalits who were cultivating the land for the last 70 years.

Another impact of aquaculture is submersion of agriculture lands because of misuse of irrigation channels and drain canals. As per government records around 250 canals should be existing for drinking water and drainage purpose.

All these canals have been diverted to meet the needs of the aqua farms. All these canals are silted up. Even a small rain now submerging agricultural lands. The aquaculture polluted the land and water. The natural soil revitalising organisms like earthworms, snails have been exploited for use as feed for in the aquafarms. This has reduced the productivity of the land drastically and Dalits are facing the brunt of the problem.

Dalit agriculture labourers are the most affected by the aquaculture. As 69,000 acres of agriculture land was converted into aquaculture farms, 5.382 million workdays were lost in agriculture annually only in Kolleru lake area. Besides, labour used to earn extra income by other allied work locally. As aquaculture destroyed the entire flora fauna in the area, Dalits were denied other sources of earning.

Intensive aqua-farming also replaced manual labour with machinery. Before the globalisation, 250 labourers used to dig one pond. With the use of proclainers, only three manual labourers are needed for one pond. Similarly, feeding, watering and draining the pond is done by use of machines (motor boats, diesel engines) which has replaced 19 manual labourers per pond. Before the aquaculture boom, Dalits used to migrate only during the agriculture off-season. Now Dalits are migrating throughout the year to far away places in other states like Goa and Maharashtra.

Aquaculture has made Dalits to once again take-up 'unclean' occupations which a few Dalits stopped doing. Dalit labour is being used to mix human excreta and cattle dung in water for decomposing. Once decomposed, this has to be applied to the aqua-farms as feed. Aquaculturists follow this method as it is cheaper than other fodder and comparatively gives better yield. But this process produces a pungent smell, which is nauseating. A majority of Dalits who are engaged in this work were found to be suffering from number of ailments ranging from skin to respiratory diseases.

What it adds up to

It is clear that the state is following the World Bank's agenda. Both its policies and programmes have been reformatted to suit conversion of national resources as investment opportunities for global investors on priority basis. The lives and livelihoods of the poor have been made as secondary considerations. The World Bank influenced state development policies main focus is stated in Andhra Pradesh : VISION 2020 Overview, 'attracting multinational investors who have withdrawn from countries like Thailand, Philippines and China (due to over-exploitation), and importers consequently looking for new pastures.....'

Sufferings of millions of poor Dalits and weaker sections are being ignored by the government in the process of attracting, encouraging, protecting a few hundred global investors and exporters.

What is needed to be done

At this crucial juncture, government policies and the recent reforms need to be looked critically from the 'welfare of the poor' perspective. The government machinery should be directed to protect the

interests of the poor at par with the rich investors. For instance, hardly there is any action by the state in implementing the Water (prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Government should be made accountable for neglecting these critical responsibilities. Short-term and long-term rehabilitation programmes should be immediately worked out with active partnership of the poor sections (Dalits and other backward castes) who have been affected by the commercial aquaculture. Any investment and development of aquaculture plans and schemes should make the local fisher and Dalits communities as stakeholders. Government should keep in mind how countries like Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia and China were affected before taking any decisions.

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Palestine

All of our life is a story, isn't it. Since my childhood my country has been under occupation. In 1948, the British Mandate's occupation was replaced by alien Israeli, Egyptian and Jordanian ones. This resulted from war in the region arising from the unacceptable the United Nation Resolution number 181. In 1967, all of Palestine fell under Israeli occupation that exists until today.

The political context

Palestine: During the British Mandate (1920–48), Palestine's borders were defined to include an area of 27,000 km². In 1947, the United Nations proposed a partition plan to divide Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The Palestinians and all States in the region rejected the plan because of its unfairness to the Palestinians, its denial of their right to self-determination, and their subjection to the control of a colonial, minority population. In 1948, the Zionist/Jewish colonial population unilaterally declared Israel as an independent state that would end-up including over 78% of mandatory Palestine, while Jordan and Egypt would administer the remaining lands—the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was during the establishment of the State of Israel that Israel completely eradicated 531 Palestinian villages, while taking over other villages and major cities to replace their population with foreign (Jewish) inhabitants from elsewhere. This program created a refugee population that today numbers some 5,000,000 spread across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, inside Israel, the Arab world and worldwide.

In 1967, another war broke out in which Israel occupied the remaining 22% percent of historic Palestine, which comprised of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with a land area of 6000 km². By 1967, all of historic Palestine was in the hands of the Jewish colonial project that planned and implemented over the preceding 100 years ago.

Immediately upon the 1967 occupation, Israel executed an intense campaign to colonize all types of Palestinian lands and properties, and to segregate Palestinian built-up areas in the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. This formed part of a long-term vision, the implementation of which developed inside the 1948–49 Armistice borders (Green Line), incorporating as much Palestinian land as possible under Israeli control. During 1967–86, Israel implemented a series of plans, such as the Alon and Gush Emunim Plans (named after Israel's Labor Minister at the time, and the ultranationalist/fascist settler movement founded in 1974, respectively) with the aim of constructing colonies and further segregating the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Egypt and Jordan. This involved the annexation and/or confiscation of well over 50% of the West Bank.

In this same period, Israeli Minister of Agriculture (General) Ariel Sharon (present-day prime minister) spearheaded the colonial philosophy under the title "fighting terrorism," meant to suppress any form of Palestinian resistance to occupation and dispossession. Not surprisingly, Sharon's strategy to "fight terrorism" came hand-in-hand with an Israel's intensified colonial construction along the Green Line, in order to erase the borders between the West Bank and Israel and (literally) pave the way for the annexation of all of historic Palestine.

Therefore, Sharon's plan also was patterned to create wide swaths of colonies and a network of bypass roads across the entire West Bank, connecting the Green Line with the Jordan Valley, in the east. The Military Government of Israel effectively annexed the greatest possible extend of Palestinian lands, relegating the majority of the indigenous population into enclaves. For Israeli military and civil planners, the indigenous Palestinian population posed a "demographic concern" under Israel's administration. Today's map of the West Bank, therefore, reflects this vision.

The Oslo "Peace" Process, arising from the 1993 Declaration of Principles (DoP), signed by the PLO and Israel and forming a guide for peace negotiations based on the principles of "land for peace and implementation of United Nations SC resolutions 242 and 338." During the 1990s, a series of interim implementation negotiations and agreements took place without reaching a final status agreement to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Occupied Territory (OPT). On the contrary, this period was marked by the classification of the West Bank into six parts (Areas A, B, C, H1, H2 and nature reserves) that formed countless disconnected enclaves encircled by settlements and bypass roads. Moreover, this period saw the further intensification of land confiscations, implantation of illegal settlements, and Palestinian home demolitions by Israel in the OPT.

Ultimately, before the breakdown of negotiations in 2000, Israel's had "offered" to withdraw only from 18.2% of Palestinian lands in area A (full Palestinian controlled enclave) and 21.8% of area B (Palestinian civil control, Israeli security control).

Since the DoP, the gap between peaceful negotiations in rhetoric and what was taking place on the ground was immense. In fact, since 1993, the number of settlers and settlements (new and expanded) have more than doubled, enjoying their largest growth and expansion under Israel's (nominally liberal) Labor Party governments. The colonial policies extended to the OPT in 1967 realized their greatest advances during the "Oslo phase" of the occupation.

Impact on water and the environment

Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza continues to take a devastating toll on natural resources and depriving the indigenous population of its means of subsistence. Israel's systemic uprooting of trees, destruction of agricultural land, and confiscation and destruction of the water supply is devastating. The building of the new Apartheid Wall (separating Palestinian West Bank) intensifies these problems in the surrounding areas and poses immediate and long-term destruction and degradation to the Palestinian environment.

The impact on the water supplies to the areas around the Apartheid Wall is a serious concern. A number of water wells will be lost to communities near the Apartheid Wall. In villages around Qalqiliya and Tulkarem, the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG) has identified 30 wells that will be lost in the first phase of the Apartheid Wall construction. These 30 groundwater wells have a total discharge of 4 MCM/year. As a result of the destruction, Palestinians will lose nearly 18% of their share of the Western Groundwater Basin. Table 1 details the 30 wells to be lost in the Apartheid Wall's first phase.

The annual recharge of the Western Groundwater Basin is 362 MCM/year. More than 95% of this recharge occurs in the mountains of the West Bank, and yet Israel has denied Palestinians their right to drill new wells in this basin since 1967. The total Palestinian groundwater extraction of nearly 22 MCM/year comes from those wells drilled prior to the 1967 occupation.

This amount of Palestinian groundwater use constitutes only 6% of the annual recharge capacity of the basin that mostly originates in the West Bank (Palestinian national territory). Since 1967, Israeli Authorities have enforced an unequal allocation of water to the favor of Jewish settler colonies. Such discriminatory allocation poses a serious obstacle for development in the West Bank. The current Palestinian population living in the West Bank is allowed the same quantity of groundwater as that in 1967. This is an institutional refusal to recognize Palestine's natural population growth, related development needs and increased social or hygiene requirements for those born during the past 35 years. Although the 4th Geneva Convention provides that the Occupying Power bears the obligation to supply the occupied population with its needs, Israel fails to meet the barest minimum standards of civilized practice.

Israel's general practice of uprooting trees is also a grave environmental concern. In the specific case of Israel's Apartheid Wall project, its first phase of construction will place between 160–180,000

dunums [4 dunums = 1 hectare] on the Israeli side of the Apartheid Wall. Its construction will uproot and raze tens of thousands of trees. Trees play a major role in preserving the environment and ecological balance of the area. The various kinds of trees, most notably the olive tree, are also a basic part of the Palestinian landscape, cultural heritage and livelihood. The role of trees could be summarized as follows:

- Ensuring rainfall drainage and absorption into the soil and recharging the aquifer
- Improving air quality by trapping and holding harmful dust particles. Leaves absorb carbon dioxide and other poisonous gases and, in turn, replenish the atmosphere with oxygen and utilize carbon dioxide
- Providing a cooling effect on the climate in the hotter months
- Reducing noise pollution by absorbing sounds
- Controlling runoff and preventing erosion
- Increasing soil fertility and productivity.
- Stabilising soils and preventing the flow of sediment and chemicals into streams, whereas the roots trap pollutants that would contaminate groundwater.
- Sustaining and promoting wildlife diversity by providing structure for the local ecosystem and providing a suitable habitat for many animals and birds that otherwise would be absent.

Although an environmental impact assessment of the Apartheid Wall has yet to be performed, the trees that already have been uprooted for its construction will have an impact on the environment as a whole. In addition, the Apartheid Wall itself is a physical barrier to the terrestrial ecosystem.

The footprint (the area of the Apartheid Wall and the associated land mass on either side) will be enormous. In the first phase of construction the area lost as a direct result of the Apartheid Wall could be as much as 11,500 dunums. The footprint of the entire Apartheid wall as proposed could be as much as 35,000 dunums. Construction of such a massive structure and the disturbance of such a large land mass will have significant impact on the ecology of the area.

The associated environmental effects of construction of the Apartheid Wall will be extensive to both the hydrologic system and the flora and fauna of the region. There will be severe long-term environmental effects also due to the presence of the Apartheid Wall. As a result of the habitat loss, the microecology of the area is impacted and weeds, pests and pathogens which are often exotic (alien) will possibly invade and thrive in the disturbed areas. The Apartheid Wall will displace and fragment species and negatively affect animal diversity, distribution and movement patterns. However, the Wall's impact on human existence is most deliberate and apparent in the short and longer terms.

The Apartheid Wall in its context

The location of the Apartheid Wall is designed to incorporate all Israeli colonies that have been built on Palestinian territories to the eastern side of the Green Line into Israel. The Green Line itself measures at least 350 km in length. Through constructing the Apartheid Wall, Israel is annexing, confiscating, and bulldozing thousands of dunums of Palestinian lands, uprooting thousands of fruit trees, cutting off Palestinian towns and villages from their countryside, and] fragmenting Palestinian built-up areas in segregated pockets on both sides of the Wall. Thus, the Apartheid Wall idea did not start from scratch, but is a result of long-term planning and policy of unilateral segregation and annexation.

Considering United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which declare the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Occupied Palestinian Territories, Israel's latest, initiative to build the Apartheid Wall is, in fact, a systematized, internationally crime of land theft. The building of the Apartheid Wall

is based on the violation of environmental and human rights, as Israel continues, on a daily basis, to construct new settler colonies and outposts, bypass roads, military checkpoints, and closed military zones. The over 2,000,000 Palestinian in the West Bank are at the mercy of 400,000 illegal settlers (200,000 of which are in East Jerusalem), and one of the most powerful militaries in the world.

The fact and placement of the Apartheid Wall answers to the needs of Israel's settlers, politicians—left and right—repeatedly have confirmed in public that the Apartheid Wall has nothing to do with a solution based on the 1967 borders, but is a security concern and a politico-tactical move that can benefit Israel's continuing expansion and attainment of lands at the expense of their indigenous Palestinian owners.

The support within Israel for the Apartheid Wall is unanimous, including the Israeli Labor Party. Haim Ramon and Binyamin Ben Eliezer, both of Labor, are some of the most outspoken proponents of the Apartheid Wall, calling it not only a security measure, but a tactical one that will be part of a "peace plan" that they, if given the chance in power, would put into effect. Ben Eliezer, Defense Minister during much of the Intifada under Sharon, has given repeated orders to pursue the Apartheid Wall, and has gone even further to instruct the Israeli Airports Authority to construct five crossing points along the seam line, based on the assumption that the Apartheid Wall will be built. In fact, the Airport Authority concurs that it first started plans for the unilateral border crossings prior to the Intifada. (*Ha 'aretz*, 29 October 2002) This only strengthens the claim that the Apartheid Wall is a part of a larger, tactical pursuit that has its roots prior to the Intifada.

My experience in the social context

I begin my story in 1967, when I returned to Palestine after pending 15 years in and out of prisons and schools. Both served to strengthen my resolve to resist and campaign against governmental politics.

In 1981, I witnessed the first in a series of Israeli land thefts. Under Sharon's Seven Stars Plan, a series of settlements and industrial zones were built along and straddling the Green Line with the purpose of robbing Palestinian land and harassing Palestinian labor in factories similar to the Mexican border's *maciladores*.

Late on 1988, Israel's Military Government robbed my town, Jayyus. We were robbed of 1,362 dunums that Israel deemed necessary for security reasons. Security and globalization are harmless, comforting words that shroud destructive agendas. Under the security umbrella, Israel has able to confiscate tens of thousands of dunums of Palestinian lands and enforce a policy of closure that renders sustainable economy nearly impossible.

Today I'm again forced to witness the theft of our land. The effects of militarized globalization, the conspiracy of violence and colonial forces surrounding us that seek our erasure and destruction, and the dependency of our neighbors upon these forces that abandon us to the miserable fate that Israel has brought upon us. The general Israeli closure in Palestine and the separation wall currently being built in the West Bank are only a small—but integral—part of this project to erase us. This wall is three times as wide, and twice as high as the Berlin Wall, and is flanked by electronic fences, trenches, and watch towers. Far from separating Israel from Palestine, this wall is designed to destroy any hope for an independent, sustainable Palestinian economy, by illegally annexing the most valuable water and arable land resources left in Palestine.

In the 1980s, I saw hope and potential in my lands. I saw great opportunities in introducing new crop varieties to the region. and realized tremendous success. Many neighbors followed suit and, together, we revived the region's economy. We had a healthy, self sustainable and environmentally friendly economy with markets all over the West Bank and Gaza. Our farmers were able to compete with Israeli farms, often excelling in quality their products as a result of employing highly efficient methods of irrigation.

In the post-2000 phase of occupation, we have undergone a double blow. Israel's closure policies have made access to our markets impossible. Unemployment has risen drastically as Palestinians are unable to work in Israel. As a result, Palestinians are turning to the agricultural sector in great numbers. All these will lose their last source of income as a result of the Apartheid Wall.

Thanks to my lands, I was able grow additional 60 dunums of fruits and olive trees, send my seven children to schools and all of them have got their university degrees and some continued post graduate education and attained the PhD. But how could I teach my children, feed them, or maintain their well being and survival without my indigenous land, the father's heritage? The Israeli wall will dry our lands, dry our trees, dry our green houses and leave us poor to strive. And so we resist.

In the same way that developing nations have little legal resources for resisting globalization, unfair trade and labor practices, Palestinians have no voice in the Israeli courts. Despite filling numerous petitions against the wall, construction continues. Still we resort to nonviolent means of protests. With the cooperation of our local NGOs and assistance from international peace activists, we have had great success in bringing international attention to our plight. We haven't the military might resist, so we must count on international solidarity. In this we look to our brothers and sisters around the world, including the families forced with extinction in the Narmada Valley, for courage and support. We extend special thanks to our Israeli friends in B'tselem, Taayosh and Gush Shalom for sharing our struggle and lighting the candle of hope inside Israel. We thank all our Palestinian brothers and sisters for their part in the struggle against occupation. And we thank you all, in the same family spirit, for making possible another—a more just—world.

Sharief Mohammad Omar Khalid was born on 20 June 1943 in Jayyous in Palestine.
He has been a

- Manager of Jayyus Youth Club 1970–1976
- Manager of Farmers Union in Jayyus 1990–1994
- Manager of Agricultural Cooperative Society 1995–2002
- Representative of Land Defense Committee, Qalqiliya District
- Execution board of several institutions in the Qalqiliya District
- Farmer since 1968

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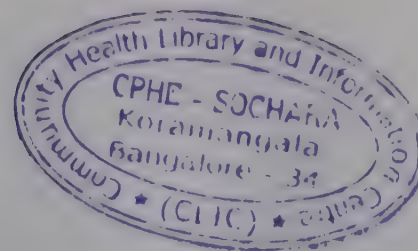
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Shabir Karam

conflict and its impact on children



Shabir Kalam is a 14 year old student from Kashmir. The decade long turmoil in Kashmir has left no sphere of life untouched. 80—90% of the sufferers are believed to be civilians. Of them, children and women are the worst hit. It started in the valley in 1989 between the militants and Indian security forces. It has rendered thousands of children orphaned, women widowed and psycho-social well-being threatened. The turmoil has also caused havoc to the trade and commerce, particularly the tourist industry. Shabir was directly hit by this conflict.

Shabir's father, Gulam Mohamed Was a resident of Nawab Bazar. He was a vendor selling cloth of general merchants on a commission basis and earned Rs 20—50 a day to sustain his family of seven. His two daughters had to drop out of school because of poor economic conditions, and support the family by spinning of pashmina. Shabir managed to continue his studies in a private school and everybody supported him for his education.

On 9 December 1995, Gulam Mohamed was killed when a grenade was hurled at the security forces at Kakasarai in Srinagar. The family got Rs 100,000 [US\$ 2,500] as ex-gratia relief from the state government. The family spent this on the marriage of two daughters, as it was an important task at that time. Shabir was then eight years old, studying in second standard. He had no idea what death meant. He used to ask his mother and sisters about his father. When Shabir realised that his father would never come back, he got into a shock. She was not able to talk to his family members for a while. He was quite disturbed and depressed.

Shabir was able to discern the difference the death of his father made in his life. Before his father's death, all basic needs were met, his education, social security and no financial problems. But now, because of economic hardship, he had to drop out of school. This affected all fields of his life. He faced a psychological setback. He felt the lack of his father's love and affection on the one hand, and apathy on the part of his relatives on the other. This added to his sense of loss and alienation.

Since he was the only male member of his family, it was his responsibility to sustain it. Shabir started working as a sales boy in a shop earning Rs 300 per month. He had no fixed responsibilities, and had to do even the menial jobs himself. Therefore, as other child workers, he was also exploited. His sisters made their contribution by spinning pashmina, which helped them earn Rs 300 per month. It was very difficult for them to make both ends meet.

Shabir was a bright student and had the urge to learn. But since he had to go through so much of suffering, and at such a tender age at that, he lost interest in everything. For him, life had become a burden.

In 1999, Secure Future, supported by Save the Children—UK, implemented a programme for people directly affected by conflict, and fortunately came into contact with Shabir Karam. The family was so disturbed that they could not decide anything about their future. Their only objective was to survive each day. Their psychological setback had affected them badly. Secure Future started a counselling process with the family as a group. Later individual counselling was also done. A family support programme was started where free raw pashmina was given in bulk for spinning. Pashmina is very costly, and this programme could help the family to generate a good income and start their own small unit on a sustainable basis. The intervention helped lessen the two year old burden on Shabir.

Shabir then rejoined the school, in a private school. He was provided with school support material. He got a 50% concession in school fees, and the Secure Future team paid the fees. The team also

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mentioned his progress in school. He was given opportunities to participate in the workshops conducted by different organisations which played a great role in building up his capacities and self-confidence.

Presently, Shabir is in standard eight. He is doing very well in studies. He takes part in every extra curricular activity. He is a topper in school. He is also a member of the Children's Group for Development, which works for the promotion of child rights in the valley. In addition, he has been admitted to NIIT for a short-term computer course.

The health of his mother is very critical. She is always sick. This affects Shabir's psyche negatively, though he is given counselling. The question of a steady source of income is still a problem for the family. the pashmina work is not able to give better returns because the mother has been directed by the doctor not to work at the spinning wheel.

Shabir is sustained by the love and support of his family, Secure Future team, Rajiv Gandhi foundation, teachers and friends. He wants a society that is peaceful, without processes or events creating orphans and widows, progress and development for all, free from stress, active cultural life, happy children and education for all.

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Dinesh Achhami

the impact of globalisation on Dalits in Nepal

Dinesh is a 19 year old cobbler from Lalitpur municipality, Ward 14, Lohachowk, Nepal. He began learning the art of shoe making from a very early age just as his father and grandfather did. He works in the family shop with three other family members. Dinesh reports that being a cobbler is a difficult profession. He says that as more and more time goes by, it is getting harder and harder to make a living out of making shoes. After the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal in 1990, Nepal's economy was opened up. This has had a big impact on Dinesh and many other cobblers like him. Since the advent of globalisation and the arrival of the open market in Nepal, Nepal has been flooded with the import of ready made factory shoes. This has put many cobblers out of business with no support or alternatives offered by the government. Cobblers like Dinesh cannot compete with these imported shoes. Their raw materials alone cost them more than the purchase price of a pair of imported ready-made shoes. Further, Dinesh says that people are more attracted to foreign made goods, than locally produced goods. People like to see something and then buy it on the spot, regardless of the quality of the item.

Prior to the influx of ready-made goods in the Nepali shoe market, cobblers like Dinesh earned an average of 100 rupees per pair of shoes. That profit has been reduced to 20 – 25 rupees per pair. Dinesh tells how in his grandfather's era, the family was much better off. His grandfather talks of times when the shop was very busy and the family had extra money to purchase land as well as access health care and education more easily. Now, cobblers like Dinesh have to compete with foreign firms who can afford fancy shops and showrooms. The overhead costs involved in maintaining shops makes competition very difficult, if not impossible.

The privatisation of a major shoe factory in Nepal has also had serious repercussions for Dalit cobblers. The Bansbari leather shoe factory used to be 51% owned by the government and 49% owned by public shareholders. After the restoration of democracy the factory was privatised and sold entirely to Indian businessmen. Most of the Nepali cobblers who worked in the factory were fired and replaced by machinery or Indian labour, causing many Dalit cobblers to lose their source of income. The factory in the Kathmandu valley is now closed and has been moved to Nepalgunj, close to the Indian border, where production takes place with new technology. Shoes from the factory are taken to India and then sold back to Nepal.

Survival of Dalit cobblers in this economic environment is extremely difficult. It is a constant struggle. Dinesh's younger brother was forced to leave the family business in search of a better occupation. After finding it difficult to find employment he eventually started working to make car and seat covers until this occupation too became too difficult as a result of imported, cheaper, ready made goods. Now, Dinesh's brother works as a security guard. While lucky to find alternative employment, he has lost his traditional profession. Dinesh has heard of organisations like the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank but is unaware of how they operate and what effect these organisation have had on his life. Dinesh continues to work as a cobbler while saving money to attend school in the hope that a brighter future awaits him.

Globalisation and the Dalits of Nepal

The word Dalit is used in Nepal to identify a vulnerable and poor group of people who are discriminated against on the basis of their caste. This discrimination takes the form of untouchability, by which Dalits and non-Dalits are not allowed to come into contact with each other in any physical

way. The caste system is one of the most salient aspects of the cultural landscape in Nepal. Hierarchical relations based on descent form an important element of the social structure and social order in Nepal. From this structure many Nepali social values and customs are formed. Dalits are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy and are considered inferior and impure. As a result, they are often left behind the rest of society in all aspects of existence. Dalits, as one of the main minority groups in Nepal, are constantly victimized on the basis of their caste or work. When globalisation is added to this equation, the situation of the Dalit community worsens. Globalisation as an economic theory is based on a market driven world economy. Due to their status as untouchables, Dalits struggle to gain access to local markets, let alone international markets. This poses a situation of extreme exclusion whereby Dalits are unable to participate in a market driven economy.

Dalit Issues in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal and other legal provisions have declared untouchability an illegal practice in Nepal. However, even after more than twelve years of democracy in Nepal, Dalits (one fourth of the total population in Nepal) remain victims of exploitation. Caste discrimination is widespread in Nepalese society, causing religious, cultural, social, economic and political barriers for the Dalit population. Despite such action being illegal, little action has been taken against practitioners of this type of discrimination. This can be viewed as a major contradiction between stated formal legal remedies and their actual effectiveness.

Systemic discrimination makes it near impossible for Dalits to effectively compete for jobs in the local labour market. Most Dalits are uneducated, unskilled and have less support than those people who are born into a higher caste. Dalits score lower than any other group on most development indicators. For example, Dalits possess less land, exhibit the lowest literacy rate, lowest life expectancy and lowest income levels of all the groups. Further Dalits register the lowest number of high school and college graduates. As participation is one of the central elements of modern development, these figures reveal that the Dalits are severely disadvantaged.

The Dalit movement in Nepal believes that there are several reasons why Dalit issues have not been given more priority in policy forums. These include:

- Lack of willingness of the government, political parties and other significant leaders to recognise caste discrimination as a national concern with serious social and economic repercussions.
- Lack of international recognition of the problem. This is mainly due to a lack of resources to take the issue of Nepalese Dalits to international forums (such as the UN, EU, international donor agencies and human rights organizations). Although the Dalit issue is slowly becoming recognised at an international level it is not being given the attention in these forums that it needs to enable the problems to be addressed and overcome at the national and regional level
- Unwillingness of the necessary people and groups to view Dalit issues as human, political, civil, socio-economic or cultural rights issues.

Occupational Status

In the current situation, Dalits who are skilled in traditional occupations (e.g. agricultural tools, ornaments, dresses, leather items, music and entertainment etc) are not only suffering from discrimination in relation to food, shelter, literacy and nutrition, but are also suffering in the area of employment. As opposed to the modern division of labour in industrial societies, one of the basic features of the Hindu caste system is the distribution of different occupations to different caste groups. As the caste system is a hierarchical structure based on the purity principle, each occupation associated with each caste group is similarly differentiated in terms of status. The work of Dalits has traditionally been considered menial, dirty and thus detested by others. The table below displays the Dalit castes and their related occupation group.

Traditional Dalit Occupations

Caste / Surname		Traditional Occupation
<i>A Hill Groups</i>		
1	Badi	Musician (Male) Dancer (Female)
2	Damai	Musician/ Tailor
3	Gaine	Musician
4	Hudke (A sub-group within Damai?)	Bard/Drummer
5	Kami	Metal-worker
6	Sarki	Leather-worker
<i>B Kathmandu (Newar)</i>		
1	Chyame/Chamkhala	Sweeper
2	Kusule	Musician
3	Halahula	Sweeper
4	Kau	Blacksmith
5	Kasain	Butcher/Musician
6	Kulu	Leather-worker
7	Pore/Deola	Fisherman/Sweeper
8	Pulu	Funeral torch-bearer
<i>C Tarai or Plains (Madhise)</i>		
1	Chamar	Leather-worker
2	Dom	Scavenger
3	Dusadh	Basket-maker
4	Khatwe	Labourer
5	Musahar	Earth-worker
7	Tatma	Labourer
8	Halkhor	Scavenger

Dalits are gradually shifting into non-traditional occupations, mainly to agriculture wage-labour. This occupational mobility is largely due to their inability to make a living in traditional occupations due to the encroachment of modern factory produced items and non-cash modes of transaction. Generally, agricultural wage-labour in Nepal is not a well-paid activity. However, other occupations, generally ones that require education, are not available to the vast majority of Dalits.

Globalisation

The ramifications of globalisation are wide and far-reaching. The globalisation process effects all aspects of a nation's existence including its economic, political, social and cultural environments. As such, globalisation as an economic model and theory has become one of the most debated and controversial topics of our time. It is impossible to deny the onslaught of globalisation and neo-liberal ideologies in the world economy of today. The 1980s saw globalisation become a buzzword on the lips of corporate giants and multi-national corporations in the western world. The 1990s saw an increasing dominance of neo-liberalism and market driven economic ideologies. With the turn of the millennium, it is impossible to deny that neo-liberalism and globalisation are the dominant forces in the world economy today. Multi-national corporations have become trans-national corporations, free trade agreements are being formulated everywhere and the World Trade Organisation is wielding its force as the most powerful international organisation in the world.

Globalisation is based on the idea of free trade and one big, borderless world economy. In an ideal globalised world, goods and services move freely across all national borders, controls and restrictions on imports and exports are non-existent and the market is the ultimate determining force. The role of the State is reduced to ensuring that the market is allowed to operate freely. State intervention, in terms of social protection, is virtually non-existent. Globalisation is said to operate on a 'trickle down' effect whereby the wealth created by capitalism trickles down to the poor. The state becomes

the upholder of free enterprise. Globalisation not only involves the free flow of foreign goods but also the free flow of foreign capital to set up enterprises in the country of choice. Competitive advantage is often achieved in the global market through reduced labour costs. As most developing countries have high unemployment rates and low (or non-existent) minimum wages, they become the target locations for many factories of mass production. While creating some employment, the conditions within which labourers have to work and the minimal pay that they receive often mean that they are little better off than before. Plus, the influx of these goods onto the market makes for a very competitive environment in which many local producers cannot compete.

Globalisation has had a dramatic impact on the lives of the common people. Undoubtedly, Dalits and other minority groups have become the victims of globalisation. This group is already economically, politically and socially vulnerable and globalisation makes them more so. Dalits are especially effected because their skill is concentrated in technical and production occupations. These skills and production techniques become obsolete under open market conditions and they are forced to leave their occupations. Further, due to the inherent discrimination against Dalits in the world of work, Dalits are left with few alternatives once they can no longer practice their traditional occupation.

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Laxman Nepali

Dalit Community (Godawai VDC, Ward 4, Patitole, Nepal)

Laxman Nepali has been a tailor for more than 20 of his 38 years. Coming from the Dalit community he is very familiar with discrimination against the Dalits. Laxman considers himself very lucky that he is able to have his own shop. He sees this as a reward for many many years of hard work and suffering. Laxman, who thought that he was attaining a better life than his ancestors, is now faced with a crisis in his business caused mainly by globalisation and the influx of readymade clothes and garments to the Nepalese market. Laxman says how people like to buy readymade goods because they do not have to wait and they are cheaper to buy than tailor-made garments. This has had a very negative impact on Laxman's business. While still managing his business, he is finding it harder and harder to make a profit. Instead of his profits growing year by year, they are declining. Regardless of how hard he works he cannot reverse this decline.

Laxman says that he cannot compete with mass production made possible by foreign technology. It costs Laxman Rs 220 in raw materials to make a pair of pantaloons that are sold by Chinese importers in Nepal for Rs 250. With overhead costs he makes little or no profit at all. Sometimes he sells garments at a loss just to try compete by building a loyal customer group. Laxman explains how many of his friends and family have left the profession. Some are working in other jobs and many are unemployed. Laxman wonders how long it will be before he can no longer work as a tailor in this environment.

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Thakri and Chunnu

Dalits in Burari, New Delhi

Burari is a rapidly urbanising suburb located in the Alipur Block, of the Northern area of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, India. The overall geographic sprawl of Burari is 2,762 acres as per government land records. As per these records, only 35% of the total land is covered under housing while the rest is either useless or under 'agricultural' land-use. This is, however, not the ground reality, as unauthorised clusters have been rapidly mushrooming on the 'agricultural' land since the last three decades and new colonies have been carved out sometimes, virtually overnight. Due to relatively cheaper rates of the available land and lesser rent, migrants primarily from the states of UP, Bihar, MP, Haryana, Rajasthan and West Bengal belonging to the lower middle and lower socio-economic groups have come to inhabit Burari. The village consists of about 12 main settlements, most of which have yet to be declared as 'authorised', thus they are lacking in basic development and infrastructure facilities.

The Centre for Alternative Dalit Media (CADAM) has its presence in some clusters of the area since 1995 and the organisation has been working amongst first generation learners of Shankarpura, a Dalit cluster of Burari village. This area had only 2-3 persons who had been to any kind of a formal school.

Shankarpura—a profile

Situated about one kilometre away from the main road, this cluster consists of 75 families, which had come from Rajasthan and Punjab to settle down in Nirankari Colony in 1966, about 8 kilometres from the present site. Due to the massive floods that occurred in 1977, they were shifted to a deserted place far away from 'upper caste' clusters of the then Burari village. The main caste-group in Shankarpura is Dakot Brahmans, a community from the Dom Caste. Their ancestral occupation is to collect mustard oil and money, going from door to door on every Tuesday and Saturday. On other days of the week, they work as agricultural labour, working as daily wage earners in small industrial occupations, hawking, weaving baskets and drum beating on marriages and other ceremonies. However, drum beating is a seasonal occupation, and is not enough to help them to make ends meet.

Practically none of the men living in this colony are literate. Only one boy named Ramesh, unsuccessfully sat for the 10th class examination in 1994. The rest of the children had not been to school and they were engaged in begging, till the intervention of CADAM and other development organisations in the area. A few children now do go to school. The women go to collect firewood. However, their main occupation is begging. Begging is an 'unlawful' activity, and attracts punishment under the 'Anti Beggary Act'. The police often use this act to harass the local people. At the behest of the dominant caste local land mafias the police often implicate the unemployed Dalit youth of the area into criminal cases, after labelling them as 'criminal tribes.' This method is being increasingly used to arm twist the Dalits into submission before the local power lords.

Thakri

Thakri is a twenty five-year old, illiterate, Dalit single woman of the 'Dom' community of Shankarpura who has been deserted by her husband. She lives with her nine-year-old son, Ravi, who studies in class 5. In her community, the practice of 'exchange marriage' is prevalent. It is compulsory to marry the son in a family from where their daughter-in-law comes. As such, there is a lot of pressure in each family to maintain marriages. In case the marriage of one daughter suffers or she has to bear trouble, the other daughter, i.e. her sister-in-law also has to suffer as her husband also consequently

begins to trouble her. Many times, the husband of the sister-in-law either deserts her or takes a divorce from her. The divorce in this community is conducted by the local caste panchayat wherein the woman from whom the divorce is being taken, is made to sit in the panchayat and water out of a vessel is poured over her or a twig of some tree is broken in a symbolic gesture of the divorce. Thakri also had to undergo such a divorce because of the sufferings of her sister-in-law.

After the divorce, Thakri began to live with her parents, brothers and their families. She wanted to stand on her own feet by begging for oil and money like the other members of the community. But her family opposed her, as they wanted her to marry again. However, she was determined not to remarry and they had to finally give in to her wishes. So, she finally began to earn her own livelihood.

Today, Thakri is bringing up her son, and additionally bears the expenses of children of her brothers and her father. She begins her day early, going to look for firewood in distant locations. Firewood is very difficult to locate in an urban environment. She does not have any other skills that can be used by her to supplement her family income.

When Thakri was asked what she felt about the new economic policies and liberalisation, which the country was following since 1991, and whether she felt that it had made a difference to the economic condition of people like her, she said, 'We have always been poor.' She went on to add that 'The only difference is that now our condition is worsening. At present, people do give us oil and money. But we cannot even do that legally as the police puts us behind bars when we go to beg, saying that 'begging is against the law', and that 'we beggars make the city unattractive. We do not beg out of choice. What can we do instead? We are neither educated nor do we have money to invest in a small business. If the government really does not want us to beg, then why doesn't it do something to help us and make our condition better? At present, our life is worse than that of animals. It is almost as if we have no right to live because of our poverty.'

Besides her struggle to meet the challenges arising out of primitive and oppressive systems of rendering justice, by caste panchayats, Thakri's is a case of survival against the state's policies to throw out the poor from the city of Delhi. In the name of 'beatification' to make the city 'attractive' to investors and tourists, the anti Beggary Act is often used to trouble the poor, as they are being seen as a threat to the 'cleanliness' of the city.

A decade of 'liberalisation' has not made an iota of a dent on irrational traditional social systems. On the contrary, it has resulted in further reduction of the socio-economic status of the marginalized, and their disempowerment vis-à-vis the state and its instruments.

Chunnu

Chunnu is a an illiterate Dalit youth of the 'Dom' community of Shankarpura. In Shankarpura, many young men like Chunnu do not want to follow their ancestral occupation of begging for mustard oil and money. He thinks it is better to earn a living by beating drums at marriage ceremonies etc. He does not want to beg but marriage ceremonies take place for only a few months in a year. So it is not a viable occupation that will take care of his needs throughout the year. Chunnu tried to find a job for himself. But being a Dalit, illiterate and unskilled, the kind of jobs he finds pay so little that he would be able to earn more by begging for mustard oil and money.

Having picked up entrepreneurship skills, some young men have gone against the wishes of their families and their community to set up a small tea-shop, a shop to repair vehicles and small grocery shops. But these shops have not benefited them much as they are unable to set up these shops in markets and other areas where they can make a good earning. A lot of money and political clout is needed to set up shops in these areas. With the state abandoning its duty towards the marginalized, the youth of these communities do not have anyone to turn to. Thus they invariably set up these shops in their own areas—often in their homes. As this does not ensure that they can cater to an

appropriate market, their ventures fail. Chunnu tried his hand at various such initiatives, without any success. Many such young men have finally given up, and in the absence of any facilities, they spend the prime of their youth whiling away time, playing cards gambling, drinking and doing nothing.

Chunnu is twenty-years old and wants to marry a girl from his own community. He wants to look after his own family but he is unable to do so as his life is completely unstable. He has changed many jobs but has not been able to stick to them because they don't give him a regular income that would be sufficient to even support him alone, leave alone allow him to manage his family.

What then is the future of Dalit youth like Chunnu? Has the 'globalised' state written their destiny to live their entire lives by playing cards or by begging which in any case is illegal? While the state yearns to see 'foreign' entrepreneurship blossom in the country, what will happen to the millions of local 'entrepreneurs' like Chunnu who, if given even a fraction of the facilities that their elite counterparts get, can create a more sustainable, equitable and relevant market system for the country.

Ever since economic liberalisation was introduced in India since 1991, the government claimed that the country would develop further and become rich, in addition to the fact that the country would be able to find its own place in the highly competitive economic world. The race began and the process of privatisation was introduced with aplomb. It did benefit some people but they were the people who were already rich and were in a minority. With the state withdrawing from basic areas such as education, healthcare, welfare, infrastructure development, financing minor businesses and employment generation, the dispossessed and marginalized communities (who are also the large majority of the people who are living below the poverty line and are mostly cut off from the mainstream), are finding themselves being pushed further away from the mainstream. In such a situation, the condition of the people who are involved in transitory, temporary and unorganised occupations has worsened progressively. The Dalits of Shankarpura are one of the thousands of these communities forced to live on the edge of survival due to the forces of globalisation. This is the true face of globalisation—the other side of the story, which lies unheard, unseen, unrecognised. It is this side that has the killer instinct—the force to wipe out the poor in the name of wiping out poverty.

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Sona

Kanpuri Samaj in Nangloi, New Delhi

The Kanpuri Samaj is a community from the Nat caste, a community of erstwhile rope dancers, singers and acrobats of Northern India. Many of them can be found in three small lanes of Nangloi, a colony situated in the North-Western part of Delhi. They came from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh about 30 years back and settled down here in a cluster, known as Camp No. 2. In all, they account for 1200 votes. On coming to the metropolitan city of Delhi, they soon found that by relying on their ancestral occupation, they could not sustain themselves in the city. So they took to making toys, flowers and other articles of plastic, clocks and some other articles that they felt they would be able to sell door to door in the lower-income colonies and slums of Delhi.

However, the community soon came face to face with another harsh reality, because of the low caste they belonged to. The police of the city would generally do its best to harass them by labelling them thieves. Many of them would find themselves behind the bars for no fault of theirs. Such persecution became a regular feature of their lives until the Mukti Youth Sangathan an organization of Dalit students and youth of Delhi, took up the matter with two civil rights organisations Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the Citizens' For Democracy (CFD) following a long struggle.

In the present context, the community is facing an economic crisis as they are unable to follow their ancestral occupation on the one hand, and are, on the other hand, unable to work with a viable occupation to take its place. Most young men and women are unemployed. Those who do work are unable to find their feet in the occupation they take up. There is an acute lack of relevant and adequate educational and training facilities; coupled with non-availability of capital for these communities. This makes it nearly impossible for them to compete in the market with the production quality as well as the cost of industrially produced articles of decoration.

They are unable to sell what they produce by hand locally. To sell them they have to go to other states where they stay away from their families for months together. In the present economic situation, where only the big players are able to remain in the market, it seems that the condition of the Kanpuri Samaj is only going to worsen unless there are concrete steps taken for their socio-economic empowerment. If pushed further towards the brink of survival, they may either be forced to live in absolute poverty or take to crime to eke out a living.

Only a few children attend school. It is not as if the other children of this colony do not want to study. But given their living conditions, they are unable meet even the most minimum requirements laid down for admission in the government schools. The local schools hold contempt for this community, owing to their 'low caste' status. In any case, the educational curriculum in the country does not respond to the special educational needs of communities such as the 'Kanpuri Samaj'.

Due to multiple discrimination emerging from Brahmanical and patriarchal forces in society, women of this community do not go out of their houses to earn a living. Child marriages are rampant. To save on expenses, parents usually marry off two of their children together at the same time. The children are expected to start their families soon after, leading to under age motherhood, high maternal and infant mortality, low birth weight of children, the birth of many children within short gaps, malnutrition and resultant ill-health coupled with either the untimely death of the husband due to excessive drinking or diseases such as TB. Another reality is the problem of women being deserted by their husbands—left alone to fend for themselves and the children. In addition to the torturous existence cited above, the women have to face the social pressures created by the caste panchayat, restricting them from going out of their homes. Only the old women are able to do some work—they generally sell fruits on the waysides.

Most families of this community are trapped badly in the vicious circle of taking debt on heavy rates of interest from local moneylenders. Due to poor understanding of the dynamics of debt, they often keep paying only the interest all their lives while the actual debt remains intact.

The Kanpuri Samaj is a victim of the current social circumstances. No concrete efforts have been made by the so-called 'welfare state' in the over five decades of the country's independence to provide concrete and relevant opportunities to such Dalit communities, who constitute a major chunk of the poor and marginalised sections of the country. In addition, these communities are being left to fend for themselves, in the jungle of the globalisation era, where the only forces that decide the fate of human beings are brutal market forces.

The life of Sona

Sona is an illiterate, single 30 year old Dalit woman of the Kanpuri Samaj of Nangloi. She is bringing up her 4 children, all by herself. Her husband died in Kanpur 6 years ago. Since his death left her without any support, she came back to her parents who are settled in Nangloi. On her arrival in Delhi, her parents informed her that it would be impossible to support her family, as they were finding it tough to meet the needs of her five brothers and three sisters, who the parents were already supporting. A small place in the house, approximately 7x7 feet was given to her initially. This was taken away from her later, when the needs of their growing sons had to be met. Sona's existence is a life of struggle, which has the moral support of her mother, giving her strength to fight with patriarchal forces and the system.

As there was no economic support system for her, she decided to go out and work, to sustain herself and her children. On learning of her decision, the entire community rose up against her. When she confronted them, and asked for support for her children, they were silenced. However, as they were worried about the 'pride' of the community, they left no stone unturned to make life difficult for her. All by herself, without any support, she worked in the community itself, selling firewood and kerosene, and managed to rent a separate room for her family. This economic independence enabled her to enrol her children into a nearby government school.

However, Sona was not able to make much of a living out of selling firewood and kerosene oil. So, she began to send her eldest son, who was about nine years old then, to sell balloons. He would sell balloons in the morning and attend school after that. But as the income from this was limited, there was hardly any increase in the overall family income. So, she decided to adopt the community occupation, i.e., making and selling flowers and other articles out of plastic. This decision of hers, further upset the community, as this time she was determined to go out and work. She was firm and stuck to her decision, in spite of the community pressure.

Years have passed and Sona's children have grown up. Her eldest daughter is 16 now. She was married off to a boy living in the neighbourhood. For this, she took a loan of Rs. 15,000 from a money-lender. Soon, Sona realised that she was unable to pay back the interest on the loan. So, she began to send her second son who is nine years old, to sell balloons. He too sells these in the morning and attends school after that. But due to the burden of increasing debt, it is still difficult to earn a living.

Sona's life is a saga of immense struggle. Her daily routine is rigorous; she gets up very early in the morning to get the firewood and buy the kerosene oil to sell. After that, she cooks food for her family and sends them off on their errands or to school. Then she buys the things she needs for selling in the market and goes and sells these in a nearby afternoon market. At around 10.00 PM, she returns from the market and looks after her house besides cooking for the family.

Sona has little idea about liberalisation or what the government is doing. The government has not shared this information with these people, about what the 'new' economic order entails for them, as these policies have to nothing to offer them but only misery and further hardships. She felt that

it is now becoming more difficult than ever before to survive. She also realises that the differences between the rich and the poor is increasing manifold. If this is 'liberalisation', then the condition of all Indians like her can only go from bad to worse.

Sona is a victim of the oppressive system, which gives no place to people like her. Single-handed, she has stood out, challenging the forces of patriarchy, globalisation and an unjust social order. She is an active symbol of survival and resilience—like the millions of others, who dot the landscape of Indian society, as peasants, artisans, labourers, marginal workers, and all others who have been thrown to the periphery of survival.

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Privatisation, Education and Dalits

expulsion of 10 Dalit students from Hyderabad Central University

The expulsion of 10 Dalit students from Hyderabad Central University [HCU], Andhra Pradesh, India is a matter of very grave concern to the Dalit community. The present instance of expulsion has a context of humiliation, denial and dismissal of the Dalit students who have merit scholarships and publications in international journals on the campus. The university administration, which has dismissed the students is however not referring to this history. The backdrop is the increasing privatisation of higher education services, the AP government increasingly withdrawing from provision of services such as education and not wanting to fulfil its obligations to its citizens.

Though the AP government has, in its strategy paper on higher education, stated that its want to usher in a knowledge society by 2020, its strategy is to act as a facilitator for greater participation of private institutions in higher education. However, privatisation of higher education, in which there are no affirmative action provisions has the consequence of that the access of Dalits—the historically marginalized of Indian society, who have been denied the right to education for millennia—to education will be further curtailed, and therefore will reverse the small gains that they have made so far. The decline in the economic role of the state and the shift towards private and international sectors means that the Dalits will have to depend on the market to a much greater degree than before. However, the Dalits face discriminatory access to the markers: there are studies that go to show that the Dalits suffer from exclusion from markets through discrimination in access to the land, capital, employment and social amenities such as education and face unequal treatment that does not appear to be justified on any grounds.

Caste: The all pervasive disease

Though the University of Hyderabad, an elite and reputed institution of higher learning, has a number of students from economically deprived sections of society, most being Dalits. Tensions have prevailed due to this economic divide for some time, the Dalits in the university being subjected to caste discrimination by dominant caste elements in the University: the administration, teaching faculty and dominant caste students. The university administration has adopted many anti-Dalit and anti-poor student policies, despite the protests of Dalit students. Members of the teaching faculty persecutes the Dalit students by insulting them in classrooms and showing partiality in giving marks for student work. Meanwhile, dominant caste students pass derogatory and humiliating remarks, particularly about Dalits getting in only through the reservation system. There has been a systematic hate campaign by 'some science students' going on for some time, with posters depicting members of SC/ST communities as 'animals', 'parasites', 'pickpockets' and 'pigs'. Referring to Dalits receiving benefits from the Government in order to complete their higher education, Dalits have been described as 'eating' and 'grabbing other people's money.'

Meanwhile, a newly constituted Central Purchasing Committee (CPC), which procures provisions for all hostels on the campus, an ostensibly seeks to weed out corruption and ensure efficiency and transparency in mess management, has seen a steep rise in mess bills and deterioration in the quality of food being provided to students. For Dalit students, who primarily depend on Government assistance to complete their higher education, the rise in prices of food has rendered mess bills unaffordable. Therefore, Dalits have been at the forefront in opposing this new 'reform' measure taken by the University.

'Managing' food

In the beginning the university had a student management mess system for each hostel in the university. After the 1990s, the university administration wanted to introduce private management

to run the messes in the hostels. Immediately the Ambedkar Student's association and other progressive organisations in the university opposed this decision. The administration then stopped moves in this direction.

In November 2001, when a new Chief Warden, P. Apparao, was appointed, he again proposed the private management to maintain the messes. The university's excuse for this was that in the present student management system, students were mismanaging and misusing the messes. There were false allegations from the Chief Warden of student corruption and hence his excuse was that the system should be changed to control the misuse and corruption. Knowing that the students would again protest against privatisation of the mess management, the Chief Warden suggested the central purchasing system be adopted as a middle ground.

The Vice-Chancellor gave two proposals

1. The basic items to be sold in the messes should be kept to a minimum, between Rs. 18—21 at current prices.
2. If the basic item prices exceed Rs. 21, the university should provide financial assistance to recover the excess burden of the new system for Social Welfare Students. At present, the social welfare scholarships are limited to Rs.600/- per month, which even at present do not cover monthly expenses for the students generally.

The Vice-Chancellor formed a committee to maintain the central purchasing system, who would purchase all basic items for the messes. The Chief Warden chairs the Committee, whilst all hostel wardens and hostel committee chairpersons sit on the Committee as members. They select the commodities for purchase and fix the prices. The Committee promised to provide good quality food within the minimum monthly basic costs (Rs.18—21). They implemented the system in two boys' hostels, A & D, in the beginning of the academic year 2001. They reduced the basic costs per day to Rs.18 wherever the student mess management had put it at Rs.22—24. Thus the Committee convinced the VC to allow the Committee to implement the Central Purchasing system in all remaining hostels. However, the basics daily cost was steadily increased, going slowly up to as much as Rs.24—25.

In September 2001, the Chief Warden proposed to implement the Central Purchasing system in the New Research Scholar's Hostel, where PhD students stay. Immediately the Dalit students in the New Research Scholar's Hostel opposed this move, and hence the Chief Warden conducted a general body meeting (GBM) to solicit public opinion on this matter of the Central Purchasing system on 19 November 2001.

In the General Body Meeting (GBM) held in the New Research Scholar's Hostel (NRS) many Dalit students expressed concern that the Central Purchasing Committee was responsible for the increasing mess charges and decline in mess food quality. Moreover, this was not being noted by the Committee, and they still raised the prices despite the poor quality of food.

The hate campaign

On 20 November 2001 two posters were put up in the NRS in response to the proceedings of the GBM. The use of sarcastic language and literary allusions in the posters barely concealed the highly offensive attitude of the authors towards the Dalit students. The posters make extremely degrading and damaging statements against the Dalit students referring to them as 'pigs,' 'corrupt' 'shameless' etc. The next day there was another poster with baseless but provocative statements made against some Dalit student leaders.

Humiliated by the hate campaign, the Ambedkar Students' Association of the University submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor on 26 November 2001, requesting the VC to take immediate

action against the dominant caste culprits. However, no concrete action was taken, except to convene a meeting of the Dean's committee, vide letter date 01 December 2001 in which six suspected students in the hate campaign were called in for questioning.

On 7 December 2001, the Chief Warden (perhaps exceeding his own powers) sent a letter to the senior warden of NRS, who is a Dalit faculty member, notifying him that an additional warden was being appointed. The letter further lists a division of tasks, which clearly reveals that he would now have to merely take care of maintenance and sanitation though there is separate department to look after sanitation.

A week later, when the senior warden received the letter the move by the chief warden is perceived as a humiliation as well as punitive. The warden had been consistently opposing the University's attempts to privatise the hostel mess management because it would adversely affect students from the weaker sections. The students also perceived the move as a case of blatant caste discrimination.

Meanwhile, even a Dalit faculty member, who happens to be the warden of the Research Boys' Hostel (Men) and was questioning some of the irregularities of the CPC, was targeted in the hate campaign. The Chief Warden, instead of tackling the issue, merely reduced the Dalit warden's powers by appointing another faculty member to supersede him as additional Warden to the same hostel. The Dalit warden was assigned to lower duties of 'sanitation' and 'hygiene', a point which roused the ire of the Dalit community, who perceived the caste bias behind the demotion.

In this connection, on 10 January 2002 at around 4:30 p.m. ten Dalit students from the Ambedkar Students Association, eight being research scholars and two post-graduate students, went to the Chief Warden's office to protest against the demotion of the Dalit Warden and to air their grievances about the hate campaign against them on campus. There they were humiliated by the Chief Warden, who abused them using their caste name and said that he was not answerable to the students. He also caught hold of one of the students and pushed him back, thereafter calling in the security people to push out the students. The students became agitated at this point and there ensued a commotion.

The Ambedkar Students Association filed a complaint with the police at Chandanagar police station, in Rangareddy district, against the Chief Warden and others in connection with the above said incident. Knowing this, the Chief Warden countered by making the Registrar of the University file a false case against the ten Dalit students, spreading false rumours of Dalit students' violence and projecting them as the accused and 'criminals.'

This incident occurred whilst the Vice Chancellor was away from the University, and when the VC returned on 11 January 2002, he did not conduct any preliminary enquiry before convening a meeting of the University Executive Committee under 'pressure' from various teaching and non-teaching associations. Within hours, and without a hearing in which to tell their side of the story, the ten Dalit students were rusticated from the University forever.

Moreover, false cases have been foisted against them under non-bailable legal provisions, leading to the arrest without the production of arrest warrants of six of the ten students by Chandanagar police. In this connection, a Joint Action Committee was created to protest against the caste discrimination meted out to the Dalit students, and their unfair rustication without any hearing. The Committee called for revocation of the rustication decision, an impartial inquiry into the whole episode, abolition of the Central Purchasing Committee and to take decisive and immediate action against all those on campus who are perpetrating caste discrimination and caste violence against Dalit students on campus. The Committee met University officials, including the Chancellor, but no action has resulted to reverse the University's rustication decision.

Current status

The students filed a case in the High Court, and got a stay on the rustication order, pending final decision on revocation of the rustication order. Hearing was completed on 4 October 2002 and judgement was rendered on 11 November 2002. The case of the students was dismissed by the High Court in favour of the university administration. The students are now considering their options, including an internal solution. Meanwhile, all students cannot continue their studies. Some have returned to their homes, whilst others remain in Hyderabad until this matter gets resolved. The university meanwhile remains firm that they will not revoke the rustication order, despite civil society protests and the court case.

Given this rather long history of events, the fact-finding committee of civil society organisations were appalled that instead of addressing the grievances of Dalit students, the University should take the decision of rusticating 10 Dalit students without any enquiry and dubbing a scuffle that was provoked by casteist remarks as an incident of violence. The various acts of humiliation and verbal violence that the Dalit students have been facing on the campus have gone unnoticed. The fact-finding team strongly urged that the following steps be taken with immediate effect:

- Withdraw with immediate effect the rustication orders issued to the 10 students
- Withdraw with immediate effect the police complaints filed against the 10 students
- Institute an enquiry into the issue of hostel mess management and the appointment of the additional warden in NRS
- Hold a public discussion involving students about the need and role of the Central Purchasing Committee
- Take pro-active steps to create a Dalit friendly atmosphere on the campus

Biographical information:

10 Dalit students, either research scholars or post-graduate students, all staying in the New Research Scholar's Hostel at time of incident. All are from rural AP, all first generation educated in their respective families. All from agricultural labour background.

1. B. Nageswararao, PhD Economics, social welfare scholarship holder (Rs.600/- per month).
2. D. Nagaraju, PhD History, JRF scholarship (Rs.5000/ per month).
3. R. Seshagarirao, PhD Philosophy, social welfare scholarship.
4. Seshu Babu, PhD Hindi, Social welfare scholarship.
5. D. Lenin Babu, PhD Chemistry, CSIR fellowship (Rs.5-6,000 per month).
6. G. V. Karunakar, PhD Chemistry, CSIR fellowship.
7. Chinna Babu, MA Anthropology, social welfare scholarship.
8. Dhanaraju, MA History, social welfare scholarship.
9. Vijay Kumar, MPhil Sociology, social welfare scholarship.
10. Uday, MPhil History, social welfare scholarship.

Durga Seth

Collateral damage of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation

Durga Seth is a Dalit youth of about 22 years of Insha village in Agalpur block. He has studied up to the intermediate level. Two years back, he had gone to Bhadoi in Uttar Pradesh to work in the carpet industry. He hails from a joint family of 11 persons. The main source of livelihood for the family is cultivation and daily wage labour. The family owns about 1 acre of bahal land, which is cultivated by his father. His elder brother is mainly engaged as a daily wage labour.

He had developed blisters and black patches all over his body when he returned to his village in early 2001. He visited the local PHC in Agalpur for treatment. The doctor diagnosed the symptoms as a doubtful case of HIV—AIDS and referred him to the district hospital at Bolangir. The doctors in Bolangir hospital also diagnosed him as a doubtful case of HIV—AIDS and referred him to Burla Medical College for undertaking the ILEISA test. He was shifted to a secluded room in the Bolangir hospital and was given rice, dal and sugar water by the family members. The medical staff also maintained a distance from Durga. His family members, fed up by the ill treatment and callous attitude of the medical staff took him back home after 2 days.

It so happened that a ward boy of the Agalpur PHC belonging to Insha village overheard the conversation of the doctor with Durga and promptly went and spread the word round in Insha. The obvious happened - the villagers, shocked by the news, totally ostracised Durga's family. They went to the extent of stopping to bathe or use the water of the tank in which Durga used to bathe. They even forbade Durga to use it anymore. His family then used to carry the water to their backyard for bathing and dug a hole there for Durga to defecate. His family members took special care of his needs.

When people from CADMB went to meet Durga and tried to talk to his family, his father was initially reluctant to show all the prescriptions. But gradually as they developed confidence on the team, he showed all the prescriptions where the doctors had clearly written that it was a doubtful case of HIV—AIDS and needed an ILEISA test from Burla Medical College.

The sufferings, which Durga faced, are many—his body was full of blisters, which would burst and lead to fresh ones. He had to sleep on banana leaves so that the body fluids would drip onto the leaves and could be then disposed off easily. His family used to apply ghee all over the body to clear the blisters. He became very weak and was unable to sit and talk. He kept lying on the bed. He has also developed swellings in the joints—oedema condition—and developed piles. The Anganwadi worker was not willing to give the family ORS packets on the grounds that the packets were meant only for diarrhoea cases.

The family had exhausted all their money on medicines and treatment. His father was even thinking of selling 6 decimal of his 1-acre bahal land but there were no buyers. Durga's father was in tears while relating the family's struggle to keep their young son alive in the face of the merciless ostracism of their family.

Realising the enormity of the problem that Durga and his family was facing, Palli Alok Pathagar, the local partner organisation in CADMB, took initiative to take Durga to Burla Medical. The district collector was contacted and he promised all help including an immediate financial support from the Red Cross fund. Since no private vehicle was willing to take the boy, Vehicle of ActionAid field office in Bolangir, was readied. But unfortunately, all these came little too late. Durga succumbed to his pains. More than anybody else, a timely care from his fellow villagers could have saved the day for Durga. Alas! That was not to be. A little care was not there when mattered the most

As told to staff of Palli Alok Pathagar, a Community-Based Organisation

Globalisation legitimises the usurping and exploitation of the resource base of communities. The real cost is hidden by cold statistics and rhetoric. *Voices* puts names and faces to the human cost of globalisation by providing a space for people to speak and be heard, for a globalisation of solidarity in affirming human dignity, asserting rights and sovereignty.